This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

ANDOVER-HARVARD LIBRARY
AH 5AVA /
Harvard Depository
Brittle Book

Digitized by Google

129

LIBRARY

OF THE

DIVINITY SCHOOL.

GIFT OF

Rev. Herman Snow.

12 July 1898.

Digitized by Google

For the
Harvard Divinity School Library
[illegible] Sherman Brown
July 18[illegible]

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

VISIONS OF THE BEYOND,

BY A

SEER OF TO-DAY;

OR,

SYMBOLIC TEACHINGS FROM THE HIGHER LIFE.

EDITED BY

HERMAN SNOW.

THIRD EDITION.

BOSTON:
COLBY & RICH, PUBLISHERS.
No. 9 BOSWORTH STREET.
1888.

Digitized by Google

JUL 12 1938

(619)

COPYRIGHT,
1877,
BY HERMAN SNOW.

Stereotyped and Printed by
Rand, Avery, and Company,
117 Franklin Street,
Boston.

Digitized by Google

TO

DEAR ONES

IN

The Beautiful Beyond,

THESE PAGES ARE

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE.

As will be seen at a glance, these pages have been prepared from the standpoint of modern Spiritualism. Perhaps, also, it will be conceded that some of the thoughts conveyed are of a peculiarly interesting and novel character even to Spiritualists. So at least it appeared to the editor himself, when these significant visions were first imparted to him; and that notwithstanding his more than twenty-five years of earnest attention to the methods and matter of spirit-communications. And this encourages him to hope that Spiritualists generally will here find much of especial interest.

It is also to be hoped that this volume will obtain circulation to some extent among the more liberal and spiritual of the Christian churches; for, if such open-minded and earnest seekers after high spiritual truth will but faithfully look through the contents of these pages, they cannot fail to find many highly instructive lessons, — lessons eminently fitted to lay hold upon and elevate individual character. And this, after all, is the main point of importance. And so, even if the leading claim as to the *source* of these truths should fail to be recognized by the reader, the truths themselves still remain to be *intuitively* received and appropriated.

But to most of those into whose hands this volume will naturally fall, its high truths and beautiful imagery will carry with them additional value from a hearty sympathy with the basic doctrine upon which they rest: viz., that the spirit-world is *not*

> "The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
> No traveler returns," —

but is all around us; its happy denizens often speaking to us, and

Digitized by Google

its silent and mysterious conditions ever interblending with those of our own life. And further: that at certain favorable points of contact between the two worlds, — or, in other words, through certain highly gifted human organisms, — many of the impressive peculiarities of the spirit-life can be explored, and the results be brought down to the knowledge and use of our earthly humanity.

And thus it is claimed to be in the present instance. What is given in these pages was mostly received through the organism of one whose normal life was far from being marked with extraordinary results or claims; but whose abnormal or spirit-condition was productive of a depth of thought, and a richness of imagery, not often surpassed in the annals of mediumistic seership.

The sole credit in the matter, to which the present writer and editor is entitled, is that of having acted as a faithful reporter, — he having done his best to write out condensed abstracts of what was imparted through the seer, giving the words so far as this was possible, but the ideas always.

That these abstracts do but imperfect justice to the beauty and power of the visions as originally given, is a fact of which the writer is most regretfully conscious; but at the same time, he is confident that what he is now able to present fully justifies him in the measures taken to lay open his treasures to the public, with such incidental and explanatory matter as he himself has felt called upon to give.

H. S.

San Francisco, July, 1877.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY, BY THE EDITOR.

The Seer introduced. — The Editor: his Position and Connection with the New Movement. — Twenty-five Years a Spiritualist, with Some of the Results. — The Phenomenal Facts. — Extent and Difficulty of the Subject. — Circles: their Uses and Abuses. — Some Dark Shades in Spiritualism. — Leading Tendencies of the Movement. — Method of our Séances..... 11

CHAPTER II.

RESURRECTIONS.

Explanatory. — The Victim of a Railroad Accident. — Hallucination. — An Orphan cared for. — A Sleeper for Seventy-five Years. — Hallucination and Suicide. — Ten Years of Blank Life. — The Abodes of Children and Infants visited. — One waiting for his "Crown of Life." — A Little One comforted. — A Crushed Flower restored. — A Group of Indian Spirits. — Intelligence and Energy resurrected..... 41

CHAPTER III.

EXPLORATIONS.

Some Spirit Homes, and what they teach. — Social Shams unveiled. — A Spirit-Rebuke, and its Recompense. — A

Digitized by Google

PAGE

Church Gathering in Spirit-Life. — Glimpses of Hades.— A Child of the Colored Race: how treated. — Spirit-Homes, and how they are builded. — A Day of Judgment. — The Bacchanals..... 54

CHAPTER IV.

HOME SCENES.

A Visit to Kindred in the Spirit-World. — A Blasted Life. — Electrical and Chemical Baths. — Effects of Excessive Grief on our Spirit-Friends. — A Masonic Gathering in Spirit-Life. — A Hall of Diplomacy. — Visit to a School in the Spirit-World. — A Hospital for the Aged and Infirm of Mind. — Homes and their Significance. — Child-Sports and their Uses. — Homes of the Red Men. — Aristocracy and Caste in the Spirit-World..... 66

CHAPTER V.

SIGHTS AND SYMBOLS.

A Love-Scene in Spirit-Life. — Prophetic Vision of a Religious War. — More Indian Life in the Spheres. — In Hades preaching. — A Pleasant and Instructive Episode. — Love and its Relations Here and Hereafter. — A Zealot speaks upon the Subject. — Special Privilege Day..... 85

CHAPTER VI.

HEALING HELPS OF THE HEREAFTER.

An Asylum for the Unfortunate. — A Refuge for Child-Spirits. — Are all Human Life-Germs immortal? — "Ichabod." — A Clairvoyant Visit to Earthly Kindred. — Our Spirit Friends forming Acquaintanceship. — Silent Séances, and why. — A Health Institution for Boys. — A Mystic River, and its Uses..... 105

Digitized by Google

PAGE

CHAPTER VII.

A BOOK OF HUMAN LIVES.

The Three Pilgrims. — The Love Tyrant and his Victim. — A War Helper, and how it fares with him in the Spirit-World. — A Grand Vision of the Peace Movement. — An Earthly Monarch in Spirit-Life. — The Hermit Fanatic... 121

CHAPTER VIII.

SCENES OF BENEFICENCE.

Human Life-Germs, Natural and Spiritual. — Life-Centers and the Laws of Spiritual Growth. — A Fallen Woman redeemed. — A Fountain of Liquid Pearls. — A Religious Fanatic: how treated. — A Temple of Ambition, and its Overthrow. — A Gala-Day for Children..... 136

CHAPTER IX.

LIGHTS AND SHADES OF THE SPIRIT-LIFE.

Low Forms of Savage Life. — Groups of the Grossly Sensual. — The Holiday Season: how it affects Homes in the Spirit World. — Still Lower Phases of Savage Life. An African Group and their Angel Teacher..... 156

CHAPTER X.

SYMBOLIC TEACHINGS.

Electric Waters, and their Uses. — The Abodes of Justice and of Love visited. — Two Sisters and their Beautiful Work. — Extreme Exaltation. — A Personal Message of Wise Import. — A Rainbow of Angels' Smiles. — An Inspirational Speaker: how prepared. — Three Reform Groups: A Vision..... 171

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

VISIONS OF THE BEYOND.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY, BY THE EDITOR.

To those who would rightly understand and appreciate the pages of this volume, it may be desirable that a somewhat full explanation of the conditions preceding and immediately attending the receiving of the visions should be given. But this remark applies more especially to such of my readers as may have heretofore paid but little attention to the general subject in hand. I will now therefore give — in a somewhat free and familiar style — such of the facts of the case as may have a bearing, more or less direct, upon the object in view.

THE SEER INTRODUCED.

Mrs. Anna D. Loucks, the mediumistic seer through whom the most important part of this volume was received, is a person whose life history, though by no means of a decidedly exceptional character, has yet been one of great severity of

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

out of the mortal form. To the wisdom and will of this spirit band, she devotes herself with the greatest sincerity of purpose, although by so doing her capacity for ordinary employment of a remunerative character is rendered almost wholly useless; for it is claimed, that, in order to be in a right condition for the higher work of her office, it is very important that she should be kept in a quiet and passive condition, bodily and mentally, during a large part of her time. In short, my own attentive observation of her condition and character for some years past makes it clear to my mind that nothing but the most sincere faith in the reality and importance of her work could possibly induce her to give herself to it with a fidelity so earnest and self-sacrificing.

I will now add a few words in regard to this lady's natural and acquired mental qualifications for producing *unaided*, results like those to be found in this volume. She is a native of New England; has had no other educational privileges than are afforded by the common schools of that part of the country, and even these were but partially improved. As to her reading, it certainly has not been very extended, especially in directions naturally leading to results like these. She says that she once tried Swedenborg's writings, but was only able to read a few pages; and could never after make up her mind to return to the task.

In her normal condition, Mrs. Loucks is quiet and undemonstrative; exhibiting no especially marked brilliancy of thought or imagination, — certainly

Digitized by Google

personal suffering and discipline. The result is seen in a character comprising various degrees of spiritual excellence, among which a deeply religious conscientiousness is especially prominent. So much so is this the case, that she has ever manifested the greatest reluctance against receiving any thing like a pecuniary recompense for the exercise of her gifts, even when this has been done for special and personal benefits; though all the while she has stood much in need of such material aid. But she only consents, and somewhat reluctantly, to take what is urgently or freely offered by those conscious of benefits received.

This lady is now a widow in delicate health, with none in the earthly life upon whom she can rest any special claims for support; but to her there is such a nearness of the spirit-world and the dear ones there, that even a life of privation here seems to have no decisive terrors, if thereby she may be able to do the work of her appointment.

The exact nature of this work will appear more fully from the pages themselves. I will, however, now state briefly what is the especial commission under which she seems to act. It is that of a regularly organized band of wise and beneficent ones in the spirit-life, who, having discovered and somewhat perfected her singular capacity for good, have, with the consent and co-operation of her immediate guardian friends, taken her in charge with the purpose of making a wise use of the opportunity thus afforded them of helping the unfortunate both in and

Digitized by Google

out of the mortal form. To the wisdom and will of this spirit band, she devotes herself with the greatest sincerity of purpose, although by so doing her capacity for ordinary employment of a remunerative character is rendered almost wholly useless; for it is claimed, that, in order to be in a right condition for the higher work of her office, it is very important that she should be kept in a quiet and passive condition, bodily and mentally, during a large part of her time. In short, my own attentive observation of her condition and character for some years past makes it clear to my mind that nothing but the most sincere faith in the reality and importance of her work could possibly induce her to give herself to it with a fidelity so earnest and self-sacrificing.

I will now add a few words in regard to this lady's natural and acquired mental qualifications for producing *unaided*, results like those to be found in this volume. She is a native of New England; has had no other educational privileges than are afforded by the common schools of that part of the country, and even these were but partially improved. As to her reading, it certainly has not been very extended, especially in directions naturally leading to results like these. She says that she once tried Swedenborg's writings, but was only able to read a few pages; and could never after make up her mind to return to the task.

In her normal condition, Mrs. Loucks is quiet and undemonstrative; exhibiting no especially marked brilliancy of thought or imagination, — certainly

Digitized by Google

nothing to justify the inference that such remarkable results could come from her own unaided capacity. She has lived in San Francisco many years; and her many friends here will doubtless readily recognize in its main features the correctness of the sketch I have thus given.

THE EDITOR: HIS POSITION AND CONNECTION WITH THE NEW MOVEMENT.

I will now proceed to give some account of my own position, and of my connection with what I regard as the great reform movement of the age; this being in some degree desirable to enable the reader to give a just weight to my testimony and judgment in regard to the general subject now in hand.

I am, then, a regularly educated Christian minister; having graduated from the Theological Department of Harvard University, in the class of 1843. So far as I know, I am still in regular standing in one of the liberal denominations of our land: at any rate, my name is still, without any special agency of my own, retained upon the list of accredited ministers. Owing, however, to long-continued ill health, and also to my special devotion to the cause of Spiritualism, it has now been about ten years since I have been actively engaged in the duties of my profession.

I have no complaint to make of the treatment I have received at the hands of my ministerial brethren: on the contrary, I feel that — considering the fact that for full twenty-five years I have been much

Digitized by Google

absorbed in what to many of them has doubtless seemed a very unwise, almost an absurd movement, — I have received at least a reasonable share of kindness and courtesy.

For this perhaps somewhat exceptional treatment in cases of the kind, I desire to return all due acknowledgment. Not, however, that I regard it as beyond what was justly my due; for a deep personal consciousness bears me witness, that the general purpose of my life has been to know and follow the truth, and never more so than in the specially absorbing efforts of my later years.

A brief outline of my connection with modern Spiritualism will now be given.

In the spring of 1852, being still in the active duties of the ministry, and feeling that it was but right for me, as a disinterested seeker after all truth, to look into the then novel claims of Spiritualism, as well as into other subjects relating closely to human welfare, I, with great effort, so far overcame my strong feelings of repulsion in that direction, as to turn my attention to something like an earnest investigation.

Circumstances favored my purpose; for whilst engaged for a few weeks in supplying a vacant pulpit in Brattleboro', Vt., I found in the private family, then temporarily my home, the very opportunity which I needed. And here, after several weeks of the closest attention to the subject, under circumstances utterly precluding the idea of fraud, or even a desire to mislead, what I had begun as a repulsive

Digitized by Google

duty ended in a decided and joyous conviction that the leading claim of the new Spiritualism was founded on the truth.

Subsequent attention to the subject steadily increased the strength of my belief. At length I came to the conclusion that a reasonable degree of loyalty to a truth of such striking and far-reaching significance, demanded of me some open and public avowal of my faith; and none the less did this seem to be the case, from the fact that the truth to be maintained was one which — especially at that early stage of the movement — was generally regarded as only a fit subject of contempt and ridicule.

Within the first year of my experience, therefore, I prepared for the press a pamphlet entitled, "Incidents of Personal Experience whilst investigating the new Phenomena of Spirit Thought and Action." This I had printed for an entirely free circulation; and a copy was sent to every minister of my denomination, and also to all the leading laymen whom I found it in my power thus to reach.

Afterwards I combined other matter with this pamphlet; and, during the year 1853, published a small volume, — now long since out of print, — entitled "Spirit Intercourse."

And so on down to the present time, I have made it an especially prominent part of my efforts, both public and private, better to understand and the more widely to make known the great truth that now at length, — amid all the wonderful discoveries

Digitized by Google

of the age, — the immortals of the Beyond had found out a way in which to convey positive intelligence to mortals of the earth, — a way which, although far from being perfected, was yet sufficiently open to allow of the sending of distinctly expressed messages, by telegraph as it were, from the unseen world.

In order to facilitate these ends, so important to my mind, for something over a year (in 1853–4) I kept open, in the city of Boston, a public hall and reading-room, to whose free use all those interested in the new faith were cordially invited. Voluntary contributions only were received in support of this enterprise. My own personal benefit from this arrangement consisted mainly in the opportunity thus afforded for a more full and satisfactory observation of the new phenomena, and in a mutual interchange of thought and experiences with the persons from all parts of the country who from time to time called upon me there.

Having thus become closely and publicly connected with the new faith, it followed that ever after, wherever I went, either as a preacher or otherwise, I was constantly coming in contact with minds interested in the same direction as myself; and, whenever this was the case, I was almost sure to be the recipient of some fresh collection of personal experiences, all of which, though most interesting and wonderful to the individuals themselves, yet to me, in due course of time, became somewhat monotonous and oppressive. Indeed, I at length became decidedly overburdened and surfeited with the vast accumulation of strik-

Digitized by Google

ingly significant facts; so much so that it became with me an object to avoid, rather than to invite, such narratives of personal experience.

This has especially been the case for about ten years past, during which I have kept a liberal and reform bookstore in San Francisco, for the more especial purpose of meeting the wants of intelligent inquirers in the direction of the new movement; a movement the impelling power of which is mainly from the unseen world, and which is not therefore likely soon to cease. Opposition seems to do but little to stay its progress; but its course is still onward, both as to the number of its adherents and the wonderful variety of its manifestations.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS A SPIRITUALIST, WITH SOME OF THE RESULTS.

In giving the above personal sketch, my aim has been, not only rightly to introduce myself to the reader, but also to prepare the way for a somewhat full and frank expression of my present views in regard to the general character, condition, and prospects of this modern movement of reform, now almost universally known under the name of Spiritualism. I know not what weight is likely to be given to such an expression of individual opinion from one who for more than twenty-five years has paid certainly an *earnest and faithful* attention to the subject. There are, however, a few thoughts in my mind which seem to seek expression; and I gladly improve the present opportunity to give them to the public, leaving them to

Digitized by Google

pass for whatever they may seem to be worth to individual minds.

THE PHENOMENAL FACTS.

And first in regard to the phenomena themselves, now so generally known, and of a prevalence so extensive. It may possibly still do for those who stand persistently and wholly aloof, in their own self-assumed infallibility upon the subject, — scientific or otherwise, — not deigning even an honest *attempt* at investigation, — it may do for such to make use of their only weapon, and to scornfully sneer at the whole subject, assigning delusion and fraud as satisfactory explanations of the entire mass of these modern wonders, the reality of which is now affirmed and defended by no small share of the integrity and intelligence of the community. But to one who has been in the very midst of the matter for a quarter of a century or more, receiving constantly the most positive testimony upon the subject, not only of his own senses, but also from nearly all classes of persons, many of them of the most undoubted capacity and moral integrity, — to one who regards the matter from such a standpoint, any explanation based wholly upon fraud and delusion looks much more like the manifestation of a self-conceited obstinacy than the legitimate action of profound minds.

It is not to be denied, however, that there have been many frauds and delusions in close connection with the genuine of these phenomena: strange would it be, were it otherwise; for almost every marked

Digitized by Google

reality is closely followed by its shadowed falsity. But that, amid all the vast accumulations of such wonders during the past thirty years, there is an absolute abundance of genuine facts, is what no one who has faithfully followed the movement can reasonably doubt.

And yet it is doubtless true that the fraudulent of these phenomena — including not only those of unprincipled mediums, but also the dishonest trickery of the so-called exposers — seem now to be greatly on the increase; so much so that the most strenuous efforts of all, especially of the true friends of Spiritualism, should be put forth to correct the evil.

EXTENT AND DIFFICULTY OF THE SUBJECT.

The leading phenomenal facts of Spiritualism, then, I regard as established beyond reasonable doubt or cavil. But there is doubtless a wide field for investigation fairly included within the general scope of the facts. Indeed, the subject, as a whole, is an exceedingly extended one, leading often into mazes of unusual perplexity and difficulty. It can only be through earnest and patient effort that any thing like satisfaction can be reached upon some points of the inquiry.

How can individual spirits be *positively* identified? Are not most of what are generally received as tests in such cases imperfect as to the exact end in view, proving only instead that *some* invisible thought-reading intelligence is present with power to reflect back through the mediumistic capacity important facts as

Digitized by Google

found in our own minds? How far are these unseen intelligences of a reliable and beneficent character? How far are they fitted to be our instructors? and how far do they themselves need instruction at our hands? What are the most prominent dangers and abuses of spirit-communion?

Questions like these open a wide field of somewhat perplexing thought, for any thing like a full exploration of which, volumes rather than pages would be required, and that by the very best of the many able minds now engaged in such investigations: therefore no attempt of the kind will now be made. The most I can do, under existing circumstances, is to bring forth to view a few of the thoughts most prominent in my own mind in regard to the general character and tendency of the Spiritualism of to-day.

To those who have paid much attention to the subject, it must be obvious, that, in a movement like this, there must be apparent upon the surface of things tendencies of a greatly varied character. For how can it be otherwise? The world with which we are now in close and positive communication is made up of the usual varieties of character as seen here; it being constantly peopled, or colonized as it were, from our own earthly life. It is not the wise and the good alone that we send out from our midst over the river of death, but also the foolish and the false, the selfish and the base; in short, every possible shade of character that our earth has ever borne upon its bosom. What we call death has only to do with the *modes* of existence: it does not, it *can not*, work a positive

Digitized by Google

change in the real, inward character. Of this, such as have had much to do in the way of communicating with those who have just passed over to the other side have had abundant proof.

CIRCLES: THEIR USES AND ABUSES.

Here, then, we have it clearly before us: a telegraphic communication, so to speak, has been opened between the heterogeneous masses of the world beyond, and of the world in which we live. It is no arbitrary or partial arrangement by which this channel of intercourse is thus laid open; but, like all the action of natural law, it is freely accessible to all who are careful to comply with the required conditions, even as one would have to do in order to send a telegraphic communication on the earthly plane of action.

Essential harmony of condition between all the parties concerned, visible and invisible, is one of the most important of these established laws of success in the new way of communication. Hence we may conclude that the moral atmosphere on the invisible side of a company, or circle, assembled for purposes of communion, is not in its immediate contact very much elevated above that of the company still in the mortal form.

Now let us consider for a moment what the general tone, or actual spiritual condition, of the average of such circles is likely to be, — that is, so far as our knowledge of human nature as it is, shall guide us. Do we find here such conditions as would naturally

Digitized by Google

bring into a near presence invisible ones especially fitted to impart a high order of spiritual truths? Or should we not be led to expect that the prevailing influence would be from spirits still but little above our earthly plane of thought and feeling? And would not the instructions and sympathies of such spirits be too nearly in harmony with our own present condition to allow of our being very materially lifted up in our real inward selves by what we might thus receive from them?

It is true, that, in such cases, the mental and moral tone of the invisible is likely to be ever *somewhat* above that of the visible company. It is true also, that, by the action of inevitable spiritual law, a single aspiring breath from the assembled company will instantly reach a higher condition of spirit-life, and bring down to their aid a purer and nobler help.

And so, with all their defects, these gathered circles for spirit communion are wisely adapted to the *gradual* enlightenment and elevation of the members. But, at the same time, to look upon them as in any sense the constituted oracles for the announcement of high moral truths, or for the unfoldment of the principles of advanced wisdom, is something, of which the natural result must be disappointment.

But there are other respects in which such circles are doing a most important work; in which they are, indeed, the very central moving force through which the advance of modern Spiritualism has been such as to strike the world generally with astonishment, and

Digitized by Google

the so-called religious world with dismay. It is here, in these very circles, — especially those of a home and affectional character, — that the world beyond at length becomes a living reality. It is through these, that the loved ones gone before are enabled once more to return, and to speak words of joyful assurance, — often with characteristics so natural and perfect, that a conviction of the joyful reality is so forced home to doubting ones, that henceforth a firm and unwavering faith must be theirs.

In these circles, also, many are made to catch their first glimpse of the shallowness of some of the old religious falsities in which they have been educated, and in which until now they have been held in oppressive bondage. For although it is still true that the unseen ones around us, on such occasions, are far from being in the regions of absolute truth, yet there are some forms of religious error still in our midst, which are of so coarse a garb as to be utterly unable to bear the gaze of *any* who see with the spirit, not the bodily vision.

But the great danger here to be apprehended is, that the result may at first prove to be only a change of masters, and not an absolute deliverance from bondage. Perhaps, however, this may be a wisely ordered necessity, since those who have ever been accustomed to lean upon the authority of others in matters of faith can hardly be expected to stand up at once, strongly self-reliant, looking only for that inspirational help which shall surely come to every aspiring soul.

Digitized by Google

But, looking at this matter directly and clearly, there is surely no essential difference, either in the principle, or in the natural effect upon individual minds, between believing, implicitly and blindly, what the priest, the creed, or even the Bible, may teach, or in what the spirits say. This is an error, however, in which nearly all become more or less involved in their earlier experiences of Spiritualism; but happily it is an error which carries with it a natural self-correcting tendency, which the wise will not fail soon to discover, and to profit thereby.

But it can not be denied that there ever has been a large class of believers to whom this lesson of wisdom comes but slowly, if at all. It would be easy to give numerous instances of the inevitable downward tendency of those who implicitly rely upon individual spirits for guidance, even in the minute affairs of daily life. Doubtless the true way for individual growth and strength is, thankfully to receive enlightenment and advice from all quarters, — from those in, as well as from those out of the material body, — but to be *blindly and positively led*, by no fallible being whatever; a combination of our own personal judgment and conscience, thus enlightened, being the final arbiter in all cases.

SOME DARK SHADES IN SPIRITUALISM.

Thus far I have made use of the term "Spiritualism" as applying to all phases of the general movement. If, however, I had adhered closely to existing distinctions in my own mind, I should have applied

Digitized by Google

the word "Spiritism" to most of what has already been given. For Spiritualism, in its broadest, truest sense, is something reaching far beyond the mere methods and results of a personal communication with spirits, however important these may be in their place. The true *Spiritualism* relates mainly to the growth of the higher, spiritual life of the individual, and, through the individual, the higher growth and perfection of the race. *It* reaches to the very center of man's religious nature; and, with its powerful appeals and sacred sanctions, lifts him steadily up, and out of the sensual and selfish, into the purity, the wisdom, and unbounded beneficence of the higher angelic life.

But that which I have just now, for the time being, called Spiritism, in its ordinary influence upon the individual, seems not *necessarily* to have any direct and successful action toward the higher spiritual life. And yet many, very many, to whom the new truth has come, seem contented ever to remain in the region of material wonders, of personal tests and spirit-communications. It is indeed sad to think how much of the so-called Spiritualism of to-day rises no higher than this.

But surely something more *must come*, or the great end of the newly-opened highway between the earthly and the spirit kingdoms will never be reached. Clearly the great want, in the present stage of the general movement, is that Spiritualism itself should be spiritualized; or in other words, that, from being Spiritualism in name, it should become Spiritualism in reality.

Digitized by Google

Is this rebuke gratuitous and wholly uncalled for? Why, then, is it, that, in so large a proportion of instances, an almost wholly selfish use is made of the new discovery? Why the great call for "business mediums," and the efforts through them to find out the value of stocks and the location of mines, rather than the value of a noble character, the location of the personal weaknesses and evils in the way of it, and the true methods of their cure? Why, in short, amid the throngs of those who visit mediums, are there not more who seek for wisdom to do good to humanity, rather than for that knowledge which will subserve only personal and selfish ends?

And what of the mediums themselves? Is a pure and elevated character the usual result of so close a relation to the unseen world? True, there are noble instances of this kind; but is it not equally true that there are many cases of a decidedly opposite character? If we have, as is certainly the case, faithful and aspiring ones in this class, is it not notoriously true also that there are many in the mediumistic ranks whose present tendencies seem to be downward, rather than upward, in the scale of true nobility of character? Have we not our "fast" mediums, who, though they gather largely from the use of their gifts, are also strongly prone to scatter largely in the usual dissipations and frivolities of the earthly life? Have we not our mercenary mediums, whose excessive charges debar all but the wealthy from the benefits of a right use of their gifts? And have we not likewise our fraudulent mediums, whose sad lack

Digitized by Google

of moral integrity readily allows of a large mingling of the false with the true in what they give?

Queries like these are aimed at a state of things actually existing within the ranks of Spiritualism, of a hue so dark as to almost lead one to the conclusion that a permanent downward tendency is impending over the movement. But it must be clear, however, to a deep and thoughtful view of the subject, that this seeming degeneracy is far more apparent than real, it being but the natural if not necessary result of existing abuses which are by no means exceptional in the world's general history. For all great movements, especially those of a religious tendency, have passed through similar abuses and similar temporary phases of degeneration. These have come as the natural rebound of the very ignorance and degradation to be removed.

What need have we of a more perfect illustration of this than is found in the early history of the Christian religion itself? Its conflict with the perversions and falsities of the age in which was its first advent resulted in a long-continued degeneracy, even down to the dark ages of the world's history, there to accumulate the grossest abuses of both doctrine and practice, from which its deliverance is by no means yet fully accomplished: it had to go through with all this before it could, in any reasonable degree, do its higher work in the world. And where but in the Christian records, is there to be found a better illustration of the natural vocation of mercenary adherents, false prophets, and fraudulent wonder-workers?

Digitized by Google

The truth is, that, in the present imperfect growth of earthly affairs, nothing of real value is without its adulterations and counterfeits: why, then, should we expect this of Spiritualism?

Swedenborg was doubtless a great seer, and made marked advances toward a right understanding of the relations between the two worlds. Yet it is now clearly to be seen that his visions were much blurred by the false theology of his day; also, if no injustice is done him by his biographers, his personal practices were far from being always of an exalted character.

So it is with mediums and seers of a later day. Their general condition, as to character and surroundings, still permits of various degrees of imperfection and falsity, especially as to what they receive and impart. But the world's general advancement is now at a stage that admits of a far clearer vision of advanced truths than was the case in Swedenborg's day. Hence, favored as we sometimes are with seers of a similar capacity, we have no occasion to look back to any of the past for our best knowledge of things spiritual.

LEADING TENDENCIES OF THE MOVEMENT.

I will now proceed to notice two of the leading tendencies of Spiritualism, — the two being the extremes of the movement, between which there exists almost every shade of radical thought.

One of these is made up of recruits from the schools of so-called infidelity and materialism. Few are prob-

Digitized by Google

ably aware of the extent of the inroads made by the new Spiritualistic faith in a direction apparently so unpromising. But probably more persons have thus been converted from an absolute unbelief to a joyous faith in an immortal existence, within the past thirty years, than had been done by all other agencies for the entire century previous. At the head of this class may be named Robert Owen, the great English materialist and socialistic leader; also Prof. Robert Hare of our own country. The change thus wrought upon this class of minds — a change which only a contact with direct and positive proofs of an hereafter could possibly have wrought — must have been great indeed and of an extremely joyous character: hence they have ever manifested an active zeal in behalf of the cause to which they were so deeply indebted. But, naturally enough, with some marked exceptions, of which the late Robert Dale Owen is the chief, — these infidelistic converts to Spiritualism have ever taken with them into their new faith, much of their old antagonism to Christianity and its records. Indeed, in some instances, this destructive antagonism has assumed the form of a sweeping denunciation against all religions; and, with a strange inconsistency, these persons become about as exclusive and bigoted in their Spiritualism as are the most narrow of the sects in their adherence to their creeds.

It is from writers and speakers of this branch of the movement, that come those unsparing denunciations of the Bible and Christianity, now so frequent, but which are of character entirely too indiscriminate

Digitized by Google

to carry much weight with them in candid and thoughtful minds. It should be borne in mind, however, that what this class of the exponents of Spiritualism have in their minds is, generally at least, the corrupt Christianity of the popular churches, and not the religion originally taught by Jesus himself.

The other extreme of the movement is made up largely of persons of a reverent and religious turn of mind; they having been mostly educated under the influence of the Christian churches, many of them, indeed, still retaining an actual church-membership. It does not necessarily follow that the reception by such church-members, of the faith that spirits have power to communicate with mortals, should, at first, very essentially modify their old doctrines, though something of the kind is sure to follow in the end. Therefore, for the present, this class — held by the force of old attachments and associations, and withal strongly repelled from taking a bold stand in behalf of the new faith by its unpopularity, and by the rough and destructive radicalism often attending its course — remain quietly in their old religious homes; the new phase of their belief being, in most cases, unknown even to their most intimate friends.

Of course this class of Spiritualists still look with a good degree of reverence to the truths of the past, as well as to those of the present. They still cherish the Bible, and the religion that rightly belongs to it; though at the same time the eyes of such are already, in most cases, so far opened to the new light from the spirit-world, that they can no longer be held in a

Digitized by Google

slavish subjection to the grosser errors of their church-creed. Their career has indeed fairly *commenced* in the direction of rational and independent thought, — a career which can hardly fail eventually of leading them into the regions of a clear and joyous faith.

Thus it happens that but a small proportion of the actual believers in Spiritualism are openly known as such; and therefore it is an utter impossibility to make any thing like a close estimate of their numbers. There is hardly a church or association in our land, in which there is not a large representation of Spiritualists, — applying the term now to those who are simply believers in the leading claim advanced. But almost invariably the belief, in such cases, is kept closely locked up in the secret places of the individual mind, on account of the penalties of religious heresy and social ostracism ever impending over persons thus situated.

Now, all this is doubtless not only weak, but unwise, on the part of such cowardly holders of a choice faith. For, had they but the frankness and boldness to openly declare what they secretly believe, they would not only vindicate their moral integrity, and manly and womanly nobility, but would find also much to surprise and rejoice them in their new position. They would in all probability find that, so far from standing alone in their belief in Spiritualism and in the consequent danger of social and religious proscription, they were in reality closely surrounded by many in the same condition with themselves;

Digitized by Google

some of whom might prove to be of their very best and most influential friends.

What I have thus written is by no means mere conjecture on my part: the statement is rather that of positive knowledge. For it has been no uncommon thing, in my individual experience, to be myself the means of introducing to each other, *in this respect*, persons otherwise intimately associated in the affairs of life. A mutual surprise and joy were the natural results in such cases.

But, besides these two extremes in Spiritualism, there is another of somewhat marked tendency, which may perhaps be regarded as the centripetal force of the movement. This is made up largely of religionists of a liberal, rationalistic, and radical stamp; persons who, from their own independent position in the field of thought, are able fearlessly to seek after the good and the true in *all* directions. To this class, modern Spiritualism is the natural outgrowth of the gradual unfolding of past religions, especially that taught by Jesus himself, the great Spiritualist and reformer of his own day. Between his teachings, rightly understood, — *not* as interpreted by modern Orthodoxy, — and a rational view of Spiritualism, so far from there being antagonism, there is, it is believed, a natural harmony, like that existing between the gradually ascending scale of musical sounds.

Spiritualists of this class are watchful against any thing like narrowness in the new movement, and hence they are by no means desirous of seeing Spirit-

Digitized by Google

ualism compressed within party limits. They rather encourage its universal diffusion among the masses, through means peculiarly and effectually its own. For the truth seems to be, that this new power works not naturally and easily in the machinery of the past. So varied and individual are its tendencies of thought and feeling, that it *can not* — even if this were desirable — be condensed into any thing like a general party movement, with well-drilled ranks and ambitious leaders; but it works mainly with a quiet and irresistible force, in ways hitherto but little known. Impelling and guiding all, are unseen intelligences high in the spirit life; who, through wisely appointed agencies, — seen and unseen, — are ever seeking for mediumistic openings through which to impart the new truth; and *wherever* these are found, even though it be in the very refuge of religious darkness and superstition, there a ray of the new light is made to enter. It may shine but dimly at first: yet a gradual brightening must, in the nature of things, follow, the ultimate result of which will be a breaking-up of old errors, and an establishment of the higher truths.

The pen and the press are also in harmony with the quiet action of this new power; and the searching leaves of thought thus scattered have done much to increase its force. But let me not be misunderstood upon this point. I do by no means condemn all kinds of organization in behalf of Spiritualism and its truths. It is doubtless well, — wherever there may be a decided call for this, — to organize

Digitized by Google

after a simple business method, in order to sustain and give efficiency to local societies of the faith. It may be well also to keep up sympathetic and fraternal relations between such independent organizations in different parts of the country. It is only against the attempt so to consolidate the entire movement as to make it an engine of external power, so especially liable to be urged forward on a low level, and even to be perverted to unworthy ends, — it is only against this, that, in the name of a true and elevated Spiritualism, I would utter my protest.

We have no need whatever for such a combined party movement, even were it not for the special liability to abuse. For the general spread of this belief has ever been sufficiently rapid to satisfy the expectations even of the most sanguine. Never in the world's history has there been a faith of so rapid a growth. Within the space of less than thirty years, the number of its adherents in our own land has grown into millions, whilst the published matter upon the subject is now sufficiently large to constitute an entire library of respectable dimensions, — many of the works being the product of writers of well-known and marked ability.

In foreign lands also, the progress has been equally astonishing. There is not, I think, a civilized country upon our globe, in which are not to be found large numbers of intelligent believers; and in most of these countries, are to be found also many volumes and periodicals devoted to the cause. Surely a progress like this, at the present advanced stage of

Digitized by Google

the world's growth of intelligent thought, indicates something more than shallow pretence, or a still more shallow self-deception.

It must also, I think, be apparent to thoughtful and sincere minds, that, — whatever of dubiousness and imperfection may attend its earlier career, — yet that the end must be some important good to the race; for it does not seem to be consistent with the idea of a prevailing and overruling Power of perfect wisdom and love, that such an irresistible tidal wave of human thought and experience should sweep over us without leaving in its course that which shall vivify and make green the waste places of humanity.

But the present most pressing work before Spiritualists, as already intimated, seems to be to gain a broader and more elevated view of the significance of our faith. We have need to get somewhat out of the region of the material phenomena into the higher uses of the truths we have received.

I have faith to believe that this little volume, prepared as it has been at the especial request of the controlling intelligence of our Band, is wisely adapted to aid in such a work; and therefore it is that I gladly present it to the public, and especially to the true friends of Spiritualism.

METHODS OF OUR SÉANCES.

It may be well, before closing this chapter, to add a few words in regard to the general methods of the *séances* of which the following pages contain a condensed report.

Digitized by Google

When these *séances* were first commenced on my part, I was by no means aware of the treasures of high thought and beautiful imagery that were thus to be opened to my view. Hence, at first, I made but little effort to preserve the results; and therefore, as will be seen, the reports found first in order upon the pages following, are quite brief and unsatisfying. But soon my interest became much strengthened, and my reports more extended.

I am not a short-hand writer; but having been much accustomed, especially during my theological course, to writing out comprehensive abstracts of what I wished to preserve, I consider myself well qualified for doing such work correctly. I have also, as I have reason to believe, a good degree of mediumistic impressibility, by means of which a guiding spirit-helper can guard me almost perfectly against important errors in cases of the kind. It was likewise customary to have my reports regularly reviewed by the leading intelligence of our band, the seer being in her usual spirit-condition. Thus, with all these advantages, I think that the reader may feel well assured that in reading these condensed reports, he has correctly the substance of what was originally imparted through our seer.

The record was originally kept in a journal form; and in this same order I have thought best to publish it, omitting dates, however, in most instances as unessential. The seer and myself only were present on these occasions; and so sensitive was her condition, that the utmost care was necessary on my part,

Digitized by Google

to keep myself free from disturbing influences, and to have, so far as possible, my whole being in a calm and elevated condition. Some fifteen or twenty minutes were invariably passed in this way, during which I myself at least had not the least foreshadowing of what would soon open before us, generally with renewed originality and beauty.

I have reason to believe that the seer herself was equally unconscious of what was coming, until, in due time, the first unfoldings of the vision came up before her. So soon as these assumed a distinctly defined form, she would begin to describe them to me, in language remarkably clear and correct: it was not in my power to improve it in the least. It was a peculiarity of her condition, — shared, however, in that of some others I have known, — that, even in her loftiest flights into the spirit-realm, she still remained consciously *en rapport* with myself, and could generally answer my questions, though often these seemed somewhat to jar upon her extremely sensitive condition. I therefore only ventured upon these questions when something of especial importance needed further elucidation. Our connection at such times seemed much like that of a constant telegraphic communication kept open between us, even when she was, as it were, immensely distant from me in spirit.

I will not now attempt the very difficult investigation as to how far these visions were objective and present realities to the seer, — I mean to her spirit-vision, — and how far they were subjective presenta-

Digitized by Google

tions of instructive truths imparted through psychological law. It is probable, however, that the results now given may be partially attributed to either of these methods. Certainly there were instances in which it seemed that the seer *must have been* in open and present vision with the scenes she described. At some other times it appeared even as if the vision had been prepared in advance by the controlling influence, much as is a painting or panorama with us, and then psychologically imparted through the mental capacities of the seer. Let each reader judge for himself upon this as upon other points of our investigations.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II.

RESURRECTIONS. — EXPLANATORY.

THE contents of this chapter of our volume are of a character seriously to perplex many, even of those far advanced in the knowledge of the Spiritualism of to-day. At any rate, to myself, the special phase of mediumistic seership now to be detailed was new, until these cases came to my knowledge. From the earliest of my experiences, however, I had been familiar with methods of action not wholly unlike these; as in most well-ordered circles, it has been customary, through the mediumistic channels, to impart aid to the ignorant and vicious of the spirit-life.

But the cases now to be given are quite different, especially in these important respects: the spirit-persons apparently helped by our band were neither in any special sense ignorant nor vicious, but were clearly of more than an average degree of intelligence and moral growth.

The claim, briefly stated, is this: that, although the death of the body is generally a natural and easy process, yet in certain exceptional cases of quite rare occurrence there is a failure in this respect; so that,

Digitized by Google

instead of an easy and quick passage from the earthly to the spirit organization, there is sometimes quite an extended period of torpid and unconscious existence; and from this, it is claimed, a deliverance can be greatly hastened by a special kind of action, — brief specimens of which are now to be given.

It was explained to me by the band of beneficent spirits having the matter especially in hand, that these exceptional cases to the usual easy and quick transition to the spirit-form are in consequence of some violation of natural law as to the especial manner in which the persons involved came to their earthly end, in what is called death. It was also said that there was, in the natural order of things, in the spirit-life, an ultimate deliverance from the practically non-existent conditions now under consideration; but that in order to hasten the process, — especially with some whose natural organization and tendencies rendered them peculiarly promising as active workers in the spirit-world, — these extraordinary methods had been inaugurated and continued, thus far with encouraging success.

But, whatever may be thought of the especial claim thus advanced, I am perfectly sure, that, to the medium herself, this restoring work in which for a long time previous to my joining her in it she had been engaged was a most significant and important reality. To her it had been a matter not of faith, but of actual sight, in the some three or four hundred instances which, as she informed me, had previously passed before her, and all of a character as marked

Digitized by Google

and real as those now to be given. So deeply was she impressed with the reality and importance of her work, that she most earnestly declared that she had rather live in absolute want than not to do it.

The illustrative cases from my journal will now be given.

THE VICTIM OF A RAILROAD ACCIDENT.

An unfortunate victim of a railroad accident is brought forward, and, by the efforts of our band of beneficent spirit-workers, is placed *en rapport* with the medium. For about eleven years he had been lingering upon the borders of the spirit-world, without being able to gain a conscious existence within it. He is at length sufficiently revived to gain a partial control of the medium's powers; and, from the broken words and detached sentences thus uttered, it appears that he still fancies himself to be amid the dreadful confusion of the accident. He moans over his own bruised and crippled condition, and inquires anxiously for his child that was with him at the time of the collision.

Gradually, through the combined efforts of those in and out of the material form, this spirit was made to understand that he is already in the spirit-world, and entirely free from the calamity that had befallen him, and through which he had been forced out of the mortal life.

At length a joyful consciousness of the new and better organism that is now his, and of the exceeding beauty and grandeur of the life before him, is re-

Digitized by Google

vealed to his newly awakened perceptions; and he departs from view, rejoicing in the brightness of the spirit-life.

HALLUCINATION.

An unhappy spirit who had died bound, and in prison, was allowed to take control of the medium. He had been falsely accused of murder by designing villains, probably to screen themselves from justice; and was offered pardon if he would confess the crime. This offer he still continues indignantly to spurn from him, while the most malignant feelings are exhibited toward the enemies who have wronged him.

To his own consciousness he is still in his earthly prison-bonds. But, being now in full possession of the bodily organism of the medium, I was enabled gradually to correct his hallucination. I requested him to move first one hand, and then the other; and thus the self-indulged fiction of being bound was made wholly to leave him, whilst in its place, the conviction of being now an inhabitant of the spirit-world, with an active spirit-body at his full control, was made a part of his joyful consciousness.

But his vindictive feeling still remains. A bright spirit approaches, and beckons him upwards; but the vindictive feeling holds him back, until he is made to see that there is a self-executing law of retribution which, in reality, renders the wrong-doer an object of pity rather than of revenge. Now the vindictive feeling is exchanged for one of compassion; and the restored one goes upward, rejoicing in con-

Digitized by Google

pany with the bright spirit, who seems to be his special guardian and guide.

AN ORPHAN CARED FOR.

A poor neglected child, just from the evils of the earthly life, is laid in the lap of the medium. A kind spirit presents a spray of flowers to the little one, whose eyes brighten with joy at the sight, thus proving it to be the possessor of a keen rudimental love of the beautiful — the sure basis of a quick unfolding of the little human bud of promise.

And now the medium calls persuasively for some mother-spirit to adopt and train up the child in the brightness of the spirit-life. First, one comes looking searchingly and longingly at the little one; but it soon appears that she is not the one to whom the work naturally belongs. Then comes another, whose natural adaptation is seen at once by all; and the child is borne away in a happy maternal embrace, — the medium parting reluctantly from it, with a promise from the spirit-mother that in a year she would bring the child back, and show that she had faithfully fulfilled the work of a mother.

At the close of the vision the seer expresses the most profound admiration and reverence, in view of the wise and perfect adaptation of all things in the spirit-life.

A SLEEPER FOR SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS.

Our next case is that of one who says that he has been asleep since the year 1800. He remembers

Digitized by Google

then having gone out in a boat, — he being seventeen years of age, — of being upset, and of gradually sinking in the cold water. And this is the last of his consciousness until now, when, as he awakes in a bodily form, he is told that it is the year 1875. He is astonished, and can not believe it until repeatedly told by other spirits; and a final confirmation is given by one still in the earthly body. His astonishment is excessive and half-amusing, as he somewhat facetiously remarks that he should now be a very old man if he had not been asleep. He laments the loss of all this time, but is glad that he still feels himself to be young and active, just as he was when he went out in that boat. He manifests a good natural organization, and wants to be doing something, — especially to go to school, to make up for his deficiency of knowledge. He is told that there are wise teachers all around him, and to choose one for his instructor. He does so, and finally becomes fully conscious of the new and grand life that may now be his.

On appealing to the leading intelligence of our spirit-band, we were told that this was a peculiar and very interesting case, even to those in the spirit-life, — the peculiarity consisting mainly in the fact that the actual death was not by drowning, as apparent at first sight; but that, before the spirit had wholly left the body, the entire organism had been taken into the jaws and stomach of a large fish of some kind; and hence the unnaturalness of the death, and the singular results that followed.

Digitized by Google

HALLUCINATION AND SUICIDE.

Our subject of to-night was a suicide. Almost a hermit's life had he led, constantly poring over books, his mind bent steadily upon this one point of inquiry, "If a man die, shall he live again?" At length, the present life becoming worthless in his selfish isolation, and his mind unbalanced by his intense seeking upon the one point, he stabs himself to the heart, that his inquiry may be answered.

But, instead of light, darkness and doubt still followed him in his unnatural and imperfect transition; and thus he was found when allowed to take the control of the medium. And now his first thought is, that he is still in the earthly body; but, when directed to examine his condition more closely, he finds not the dagger and the blood, nor yet his own features to the body now occupied. Gradually he is made to understand the true relation of things, and that the great problem of his earthly life is at length solved, — that, when a man dies, he *does* live again.

But he begins also to see the penalty of his mistake in thus rushing unbidden into the life of the Beyond. He still seems to think, however, that even with the penalty, the step he has taken is gain when compared with his former condition. But much to learn has he, and much to do, before the true brightness of the spirit-life can be his. But with firm resolve, and some special spirit aid, he goes earnestly to work with a zeal naturally belonging to him. But,

Digitized by Google

as our higher spirit wisdom informed us, he will, in the end, be made to see that *every* suicidal act is in reality a mistake involving personal loss and retributary suffering to an extent not yet understood by him

TEN YEARS OF BLANK LIFE.

This evening the spirit of a young girl, who had been accidentally shot by her brother while playing in a garden, came, and manifested the deepest anxiety that he should be told that he did not kill her as he thought, but that it was only the flesh, the bone, and the blood, that were killed. This she has been told by other spirits who have gathered around as she has been awakened from a long-continued torpid condition, caused by the extremely shattered condition of the brain at the time of her death. About ten years, it seems, had elapsed in this condition, during which there had been no consciousness or growth. To herself she is still the girl of seven, though in point of time she is really seventeen.

She is finally comforted on being told that she would soon be able herself, in her spirit-form, to go and comfort her brother. A happy spirit she now seems, as she passes away in a joyous company of congenial mates.

THE ABODES OF CHILDREN AND INFANTS VISITED.

The main part of our *séance* of this evening consisted in an exploration of the abodes of children and infants in the spirit-world. The time occupied was something over an hour; and the descriptive re-

Digitized by Google

ports, as given by the seer, were so vivid and interesting, that, could they have been taken down in full, they would have been a most valuable addition to the material I am gathering. But I was prevented by circumstances from giving even an abstract of what was thus received. But, as we have the promise of a further exploration in this direction at some future time, my regret is somewhat modified.

The part of the present exploration which more particularly interested me was the description of the treatment of embryonic infants. Some of these were represented as being but little more than the first germs of conception, and hence requiring the utmost protection and care in their treatment. These were kept in a specially prepared department, the atmosphere of which was laden not only with warmth, but also with nourishment. Yet, owing to the want of inherent vitality, the growth of these is exceedingly slow; and many years must elapse before the evil of prematurity, and sometimes the wrong of violence, can in any satisfactory degree be remedied.

ONE WAITING FOR HIS "CROWN OF LIFE."

This evening first came one who had nearly lost his faith in God, because, although he had for a long time waited patiently for his expected "great mission" to come to him, yet he still sat idle by the wayside of the spirit-spheres, unable or unwilling to see that a whole harvest-field of small duties was all around him, through the first doing of which, alone, could he arrive at that "crown of life" to which he was looking forward.

Digitized by Google

By this his return to something like his former earth-conditions, and from the instructions here received, he was enabled to see his mistake, and to get on the right road of penitence, humility, and of an active zeal in the immediate duties around him, as his first work in the spirit-life. And thus he is sure to rise *gradually* and *naturally* into a far richer inheritance than aught of his former expectations or imaginations. In short, this was a case of honest fanaticism, but of so inveterate a type that it could only be cured by a peculiar and most searching treatment.

A LITTLE ONE COMFORTED.

Now comes into view of the seer a little girl-spirit who is crying, and apparently lost. When questioned, she said that her father brought her into this garden, — a cemetery, doubtless, — and then went away and left her. With great kindness, and a simple method, the seer explains to the little one, that she is now a spirit-girl, and that she can not go to her father just then, as he is not in a condition to understand her presence. She could, however, now go to her mother, who was already in the spirit-life.

She was finally taken in charge by a beneficent spirit, who took her away to find her mother; who, owing to certain unfavorable conditions, was not able to come for her personally. The little one seems to go rather reluctantly, however, as she evidently has a special love for her father — a love which had thus far kept her in the place where she had last seen him.

Digitized by Google

A CRUSHED FLOWER RESTORED.

A gentle, womanly spirit, who, while on earth, had been crushed by a sensual and selfish man, — it was implied that actual force had been used, — and who, in consequence, became insane, and died in an asylum, was the subject of our labors to-night. As she came to us, it seemed to be with a feeling that her moral nature had fallen with the mental; and all seemed darkness around her. But soon, with the aid of the clear and well-balanced perceptions afforded her in her temporary possession of the organism of our medium, she was able to see that it was only the external life that had been crushed, and that the interior central selfhood was still true and unharmed as to its moral brightness; and, now that she is able more fully to inhale the bracing and elevating influences of the spirit-life around her, she becomes very earnest, and desires especially, as her first work, to return to earth, to try and make a *man* of the *beast* by whom she had thus suffered.

A very earnest and truthful spirit this seemed to be; and doubtless her influence will be widely felt in the work to which she devotes herself in her now recovered and aroused condition.

A GROUP OF INDIAN SPIRITS.

This evening a class of the lowest grade of Indian-life was made the subjects of our labors. Among these there seemed to be no aspiration whatever for a higher life; and hence the need of extraordinary help.

Digitized by Google

Now a haughty and rather intelligent-looking Indian makes his appearance, whose assigned work it is to aid in teaching and lifting up the degraded ones. But at first he was somewhat unwilling and refractory; so much so, that it was only after much persuasion, and some rebuke on the part of the seer, that he was at length induced to descend and meet the others somewhat on their own plane of life, and thus to give them the first impulse toward something higher.

Soon after, the seer herself was enabled to come into a nearer connection with the group, and to perceive faint signs of intelligence and hope gleaming from their dull and dusky faces; and, after an encouraging talk from her, a spirit-teacher was provided for them, and they were left in a fair condition of promise.

INTELLIGENCE AND ENERGY RESURRECTED.

An educated man of integrity and great natural capacity had met his death by a powerful, crushing blow on the forehead, — the region of individuality, which may have had something to do with the singular result, — and for twenty-three years has remained in a dormant, unconscious condition. But now, through the efforts of our beneficent spirit-band, this torpid spirit is brought *en rapport* with the medium, and soon through her brain begins to recover consciousness, and finally regains the full use of his own mental powers.

He now soliloquizes somewhat as follows: —

Digitized by Google

"I thought the blow would kill me, but it seems not, for I can still think and speak. But I am now told by those around me, of a lost time of over twenty years; also, that I *am* what is called dead. So it seems that a blow cannot really *kill;* also, that a violence done to natural law must have its penalty, and sometimes upon an innocent victim like myself.

"I am surprised and gratified to find how fast my mind regains its activity, and how well I can use my powers of speech after so long a silence. But I now perceive, that, through the kind action of noble friends around me, I have been put in the temporary possession of the organs of another, to enable me to regain the use of my own.

"I am now almost free and clear again. I want to be up and doing. I do so earnestly desire to do some good work! I am told that whatever I thus earnestly desire, if it be for some good purpose, I shall find the means to accomplish. I like that, and will thus lift myself up again into an active and useful life.

"A new thought now strikes me, or rather an old thought in a new garb: It is surely well that no one can wholly save himself; for where then would be the noblest part of that great field of beneficent action, in which all true souls find their highest life and joy?

"I am now all ready for work. I feel like a locomotive, with power to draw a whole train of moral enterprises. I *must* work, *work*, WORK!"

At this point a wise and placid spirit, with Quaker

Digitized by Google

garb and mien, is seen to approach, and takes the subject in hand, to infuse into his being the needed modifying elements, in order to give a well-balanced and wisely-efficient action to the powers thus wonderfully restored to the spheres of noble activity in the spirit-life.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III.

EXPLORATIONS.

In accordance with a previous announcement by our band, a slightly different use of the capacity of our seer is now to be made. Actual excursions to the spirit-world to gather lessons of instruction, and convey them to mortals, is to be her leading work for the present. A mere outline of our first effort of the kind is now to be given.

SOME SPIRIT-HOMES, AND WHAT THEY TEACH.

"I seem," said the seer, "to be passing upward over a plain of ether as substantial to my present condition as is the earth to the bodily senses. At length something like the parting of fleecy clouds takes place, and I am ushered into a scene redolent with flowers forming an atmosphere so real and grateful, that in itself it seems an all-sufficient clothing for the form. Sisters I now see, if I may be permitted to call them thus; and I tell them that I have come to visit their abodes, that I may gain lessons of wisdom for those still in the earthly life. They seem glad to meet and aid me in my work. So they at once confess that there was so much of selfishness

Digitized by Google

in their earthly lives, that their present homes are far from being satisfactory to them; the greater part of the attractiveness being at the external entrance to them.

"And so I find it; for, as I enter more into the interior parts, all seems bare and unattractive. Thus it had been with this class in the earthly life: they had used the best part of their efforts for external show, whilst the interior spiritual selfhood had been sadly neglected. Hence — notwithstanding the first show of brightness which greeted me — I now find that these sisters are often sad at heart; and in this tone they speak to me of the contrast between their condition, and the bright spirit-homes of many of those who had lived in poverty and obscurity while on the earth.

"The lesson I here learn is, that those who would build for themselves wisely and brightly in the spirit-life must live for others rather than for themselves while in the earthly form.

CHILDHOOD IN THE SPIRIT-SPHERES.

"Now another sphere or condition of life is entered, in which I find many children being instructed in various useful matters. One little girl I see, of fragile but well-developed form, who says that she is seven years old, and has no papa or mamma that she knows any thing of. It now appears that she is one of the embryonic spirit-children seen in a former vision, who, from the tenderly managed infirmary then described, has been removed by degrees, — like

Digitized by Google

tender plant from a hot-house, — until the present stage of half-hardy development had been reached. But much still remains to be done before the evil effects of an embryonic violence be fully removed, and the child be what she might have been at a much earlier stage of her spirit existence, had she been ushered into her first sphere of life in a normal and natural manner."

A *glimpse* merely of a still higher condition, where mature spirits of great wisdom were discoursing upon matters so high, that, to the seer, all was as in an unknown tongue. But here the lifting-up power seemed to fail, and she was gradually brought back to her earthly condition; but with a painful yearning for a further advance into the higher conditions, which she is assured shall be satisfied soon.

SOCIAL SHAMS UNVEILED.

The visit of this evening was to a sphere of the superficially polite of both sexes in the lower conditions of the spirit-world.

"Those found here are recently from the fashionable circles of the earth-life, and are still in close proximity to earthly ways and influences. Whilst in this lower condition, and closely *en rapport* with the scenes they have so recently left, they are able for a while to keep up the old delusions, and still to think that they are the select ones of humanity, and that the most important part of their work is to keep the superficialities of dress and manners in a brightly polished condition.

Digitized by Google

"But the delusion lasts for a short time only; for there is power of attraction from the higher spirit conditions, that reaches down, and gradually draws them out of their state of delusive self-complacency. First one and then another is thus affected, until ultimately all will be thus reached, and lifted out of this unpropitious condition.

"The first one thus laid hold upon by the higher influence, as the scene passes before me, is a young and rather thoughtfully inclined woman; and around her I see a halo of light gathering from above. Her thoughts go backward over the career which was hers upon the earth; and some of the scenes passing in review fill her soul with deep shame and remorse. But she is fast becoming conscious that a noble scene of self-recovery and progress may be hers in the future; and now she can no longer be drawn back to the delusive frivolities of the others, but turns her face upward toward the bright and attractive power that has laid hold upon her.

"Now, at length, in the others, better thoughts and purposes seem to be awakened; and thus the current conventionalities gradually lose their power over the group before me. They are, as it were, spiritually uncovered to each other, so that mutually they appear as they are; and it is curious to observe some of the first effects of the revelation. The mortification of each sex becomes especially keen when it is found out that their superficiality and sham are made known to the other.

"But the humiliation of such an exposure is the

Digitized by Google

beginning of a conscious knowledge of the true, in contradistinction to the false and showy standard of worth to which they have been accustomed; and the final result can not fail to be in accordance with the high purpose kept in view by the controlling power of this disciplinary action, and the subjects be permanently lifted up into the higher spirit conditions."

A SPIRIT REBUKE, AND ITS RECOMPENSE.

Our seer having been somewhat imprudent during the day, especially as to paying due attention to spirit directions, this evening her father in spirit-life came and administered something like a rebuke.

But very soon after there came a gentle and beautiful spirit, with robe gracefully arranged, and a bouquet of flowers in her hand. She said that her name was Peace; and, gracefully extracting a flower, gave it to the seer. Then, after receiving a gentle hint in that direction, she was seen to extend toward me a white rose. But, when told of this, I at first shrank from receiving it, saying that I was not pure enough for such an emblem. To this the dear spirit replied, "Then come as near to it as you can," a lesson which I most gratefully appropriated.

Soon after, the face of the seer lighted up with a joyous expression, and her arms were extended as if to embrace some one, whilst she exclaimed, "Why, it is my sister Laura!"

It seems that this bright and joyous spirit had somewhat playfully attempted to come in a disguise, but was withal quite pleased to find herself finally

Digitized by Google

recognized. Quite a pleasant communion followed, so that Mrs. Loucks was fully compensated for having been taken to task by her father.

There was, however, no *excursion* to-night, though it was promised, that, with proper care on her part, she would soon be able to visit the different classes of homes in the spirit-world, including those of her own kindred.

A CHURCH GATHERING IN THE SPIRIT-LIFE.

The visit of to-night was to a gathering of sincere but mistaken religionists recently from the earthly life. To a great extent, they still retained their old ideas, and were expecting to be met and welcomed by a personal Messiah. At length a bright spirit comes, who *to them is* the Messiah, and they are ready to fall down and worship him. But he prevents them, telling them that he himself is but a brother with them, and that the best in them is closely related to the best in him. Other words of a similar character he utters, until gradually and at length he succeeds in loosening somewhat their hold upon the grosser of their falsities. With especial earnestness does he direct his efforts to remove from their minds the idea that true salvation can come through any external adventitious process, and to impress upon them the truth that this can take place only through a natural unfolding of the inward life-capacities common to all.

Great now is the surprise and joy of these honest but mistaken ones, as they at length clearly perceive

Digitized by Google

that they are not, as to their natures, "worms of the dust," but closely related to God and his angels. They are now in a measure freed from their bondage, and prepared to make rapid strides in the career of spiritual advancement.

GLIMPSES OF HADES.

In returning, our seer had some saddening glimpses of the lower abysses of degradation and crime in the spirit-world; but her sadness was greatly relieved when she was also permitted to see somewhat of the means employed by those in the higher spheres to deliver the degraded ones. To her then present vision, one was thus delivered through the influence of a loved child taken by angelic spirits to visit a father in these lower conditions. Of this interesting and touching process, quite an outline of particulars was given by the seer; but I find myself unable now to recall and record them with sufficient correctness.

A CHILD OF THE COLORED RACE: HOW TREATED.

The seer not being very well to-night, and I myself being somewhat disturbed in mind, at first there came a band of Indians, who with rough comicality, music, and dancing, tried to induce a cheerful harmony. Finally the right conditions seemed to be sufficiently established to answer a somewhat higher purpose, and a change of influences took place.

And now the seer has placed in her lap a bright-looking child about four years of age, one of the earth's colored race, the taint of whose origin seemed

Digitized by Google

to follow even into the spirit-life. On this account, the delicate and very sensitive child still continued to suffer from scorn and neglect. Some kind and true-hearted spirit mother was needed to rightly care for the child; and in this work our seer seemed to become a useful agency.

The first one who came in response to the call, being still much within the earth-sphere and its influences, soon shrank from the proposed work, and left: she could by no means be a mother to one who had belonged to the despised colored race. But now comes a pure and gentle being from the higher conditions, and takes the little waif gently and lovingly away to her home, where she has already a large circle of child-spirits, to whom she is the real mother in spirit, although, as to the flesh, she has had no children of her own. Here the hitherto homeless one will no longer feel or know of a distinction founded solely on race and color.

The thought intimated above, that those who happen to hold simply the fleshly relationship of parents to children in the earthly life are by no means necessarily and always the real parents as to the spiritual being of their offspring, has been often given me in my intercourse with the spirit-world. I have no doubt but that this is a truth *in the very nature of things*, one which will be clearly seen and practically acknowledged by all on entering that unseen life of perfect law and perfect justice.

Digitized by Google

SPIRIT-HOMES, AND HOW THEY ARE BUILDED.

Now the seer goes into a deeper condition, and says, "I am going away from this; am now crossing the river I have seen before; I am soon on the other side. Oh, if mortals only knew, they would not care for the voyage; they would only care for what they should carry with them!

"Now I am passing through a somewhat lengthened darkness; but I do not feel troubled, for I am conscious that friendly supporters are close at hand. Even now I catch a glimpse of the form of a loved one in the brightness beyond.

"And now I see strangely shaped buildings. They seem to have no foundations, but all the work is in the upper part. I think that they must fall, so patched and poorly braced are they in their lower parts. They are the homes of those who have been unfortunately cursed with an excessive self-esteem; of those who, while on earth, had been quite sure that they knew it all, and therefore they could not be taught.

"One of these I now see quite distinctly before me, and he seems beginning to be conscious of his mistake, and to long for its correction. And behold! with the dawning of this wish, that ungainly-shaped and tottering building which now serves as his abode is made unto him a daguerreotype, as it were, of his actual character. And thus he is able to study its defects, and gradually, through harmonious thought and labor, to bring this his spirit-home,

Digitized by Google

which is ever the reflex of character, into shapes of order and beauty.

"I am glad to see you go to work so earnestly and wisely. Will you let me come and see the *inside* when you have got your home in order? [This to the spirit, but no reply is perceived.]

"Now I see one who does not seem to care for a home. *He* is satisfied to lie down and lazily go into a stupid sleep. But soon a thunderbolt seems to strike him; and he is aroused into mute amazement, and hears a voice saying, 'We have no idlers here.' He seems to think this rather hard, as he had never succeeded in having much of such lazy comfort while on earth; and that he might now have his fill undisturbed. But he is told that only action, and much of it for others, can give him *real* comfort. And so finally he is induced to make an effort to help some who are lower than himself in their condition, when, lo! a new consciousness begins to awaken within him; and he not only gains the peace of self-approval, but finds also that the very effort made tends to remove the morbid accumulation of crude magnetism with which he was laden, and thus to make other efforts easy and pleasant to him."

A DAY OF JUDGMENT.

The first part of this evening's exercises was of a deeply impressive, personal character, especially to the seer, who, while in her spirit-condition, was made to go through with a very searching self-examination, both as regarding the past and the present of her

Digitized by Google

life. This was, as we were told, an experience something like that which every individual must have on entering the spirit-world; an experience which should be regarded as the true Day of Judgment to the individual concerned. In this instance, as we were given to understand, there were special reasons, which would appear in due time, for the *time* and *manner* in which the personal was thus given.

THE BACCHANALS.

Near the close of the evening the seer spoke as follows: —

"I see a table spread out with all the appliances of a feast; and around it are guests seated, who seem to be eating and drinking with great hilarity. And yet to my vision the dishes contain no food, and the bottles no drink. These seem to be bacchanals, whose minds and language are exceedingly gross, with whom the low jest passes for wit, and the ribald laugh for merriment. It is sad indeed to see such maudlin vacancy in any who pass for human beings. Why, there is scarcely *any* action in the higher organs of the brain! It is all vacancy, or worse than vacancy.

"And yet it is now seen by me, that a redeeming power is yet to reach even a degradation like this. Already something has seemed to strike the low carousers as with an electric shock; and they are beginning to be ashamed of their condition, and to have a glimpse of the higher possibilities within them. Oh, I thank the divine, all-merciful Parent,

Digitized by Google

that these, and all his seemingly lost ones, are yet to be brought out of their crude and darkened condition into the brightness and joy of the upper spheres!"

In answer to a question it was said, that, to those in the lower conditions of the spirit-life, it seemed necessary that something like the earthly methods of eating and drinking should be kept up, though even here it was more of a semblance than a reality; but in the higher conditions, the needed nourishment is received much as we of earth receive the light and air.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV.

HOME SCENES. — A VISIT TO KINDRED IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

THE opening of this evening's *séance* was an earnest prayer of the seer that she might be fitted rightly to engage in the work before her. Then her father came to her, and gave her to understand that now at length was she to be permitted to visit the homes of some of her own kindred in the spirit-spheres; and that he himself was to be her guide.

And now in succession were visited the homes of her paternal grandmother, her own mother, and of her dear sister Laura, who seemed to be in a higher spiritual condition than either of the others.

The most ecstatic joy was manifested by Mrs. Loucks as she was thus enabled for the first time to look into the abodes of dear ones in the life beyond. Loving greetings and other natural manifestations of affection were exchanged as she thus entered the different homes. And, when the time came for it, it was with the greatest reluctance that she returned into a condition of closer proximity to the earth.

Here she saw innumerable hosts of harmonious spirits connected so closely in their condition, that a

Digitized by Google

throb of joy in the individual life was instantly felt by the entire united body. Thus it was, especially when any work for the good of the earthly humanity had been successfully accomplished. Yet this vast body of harmonious workers, she could perceive, was made up of many smaller groups who were held together by still closer bonds of sympathy and love.

On subsequently questioning the seer in regard to the matter, she said that the reason why she did not more minutely describe to me the homes of the friends visited, especially that of her sister Laura, was because her powers of perception, even in her then exalted condition, proved to be unequal to a minute investigation of the *higher* conditions thus visited.

From this answer, it appears that, although the general characteristics of such higher homes could thus be laid open to the perceptions of the seer, yet their more minute and recondite wonders were necessarily still veiled from her vision.

But enough had already been made known to her to show that, although those still in somewhat close relations with the earth, had homes much like ours, yet that those of the more advanced conditions, were quite different, being, indeed, much like the spheres usually seen surrounding individuals; and also that these spheres, or homes, were generally too refined for the perceptions of clairvoyant powers still enshrined in the mortal form; and that therefore, when a spirit of the higher grades of life is manifested to the ordinary mediumistic vision, it must be

Digitized by Google

through an extemporization of the surroundings naturally belonging to those in much closer relations with the earth. Hence it would appear, that when our friends in the higher conditions, come within range of the clairvoyant sight, they are, as it were, encamped in improvised tabernacles, or enshrouded in robes suited to the atmosphere in which for the time being they are, in order to fulfill their loving puporses.

And all this is in perfect accord with the wonderful range of natural law in the spirit life, as is now beginning to be more fully understood by advanced receivers of the Spiritualism of to-day.

A BLASTED LIFE.

This evening's exercises I give as nearly as possible in the exact language used by the seer.

"I feel the influence of a blasted life. It is the presence of H. C. K.[1] He is very anxious to take control of the conditions, long enough to give expression to his feelings of sorrow and shame for the wicked perversion of the later years of his life."

We expressed ourselves as quite willing to attend to his request, if the controlling wisdom of our band should consent. The decision from that source was, that, after due attention to the regularly appointed work for the evening, a limited time should be appropriated to his purpose.

[1] A prominent and well-known secretary of several mining companies of San Francisco, who had recently committed suicide. He was personally known to both Mrs. Loucks and myself, and hence the naturalness of his coming to us. I have given his initials only, as being all that is necessary for present purposes.

Digitized by Google

ELECTRICAL AND CHEMICAL BATHS.

The seer now visits what may be called electrical and chemical baths in the spirit-world. She says, "A deep and broad basin is before me. Into it a stream of brilliant liquid is running, and dashing itself into sparkling foam, which reaches even to the vessel's brim. It is an electric fountain, and in it are to be seen the forms of merry children bathing and frolicking. Sometimes they are on the surface, at others diving beneath; and again they are seen partially ascending the falling stream, and then gliding laughingly down again, much after the manner of 'coasting' by children in the earthly life.

"I am told that this is the way in which immature spirits, before the will-power is fairly established, throw off the grosser particles of their organization, and thus become more highly advanced. The effect of this upon the spirit is much like that of material bathing upon the bodily organization.

"I now stand by another *chemical* fountain. It is of a colored liquid, which is for the healing of various morbid accretions and deformities acquired in the earthly life. The lingering effects of scrofula, crooked spines, and other unnatural growths, are here treated according to natural law, by wise chemists who are in no misty doubt as to the true method or its results.

"The colored liquid appears to come from a rock above; as it falls, there is a blending of the various colors of the rainbow, adding to it new health-giving

Digitized by Google

powers. I feel like testing the effect of this liquid upon myself. I walk into it, and it seems to give me the desire to stretch myself.

"One of the cases for treatment is now presented distinctly before me for recognition and notice. The subject has a large, an unnaturally large head, for a man of twenty-four years old, as he is; and yet the body is barely that of a child as to its height. He now enters the water, standing sometimes under the stream, and sometimes behind it, with varying effect.

"The result soon begins to be felt, painfully at first. But the subject seems to be firmly held in his position by the combined will-force of the chemical preceptors, as I now feel prompted to call them.

"The change is first upon the head, which gradually loses its unnatural proportions. Then the shoulders are made to feel the reforming power of the mystic waters. Finally the limbs, one by one, are made, through the now stimulated will-power of the subject, slowly but surely to assume their due proportion and length. And now the rejoicing spirit begins to move about in his newly-gained perfect shape, though somewhat stiffly and carefully at first, as if in fear of a relapse into the old conditions: and occasionally there *are* symptoms of this; but then the watchful care and will-power of the chemists avert the threatened relapse, and thus on until the will-force of the patient is rightly established, and the renovated person is safe."

In closing, it was said that, if the power, and right use of the will were but fully understood and wisely

Digitized by Google

used, this in itself might be the all-potent agent with which to heal one's self; and it was prophesied that the time was at hand when earthly physicians of advanced wisdom would fully understand this, and be guided accordingly.

And now, as by previous arrangement, came our unfortunate friend H. C. K.; and with him we had a long, sad talk concerning the last three years of his earthly life, during which, step by step, he had descended from his previous honorable life, deeper and still deeper into evils of various kinds; until, goaded on by despair, he had committed the crowning act of wickedness, — the taking of his own life.

And now to him it appeared to be, though a deeply humiliating, yet a grateful privilege, thus to pour out his bitter regret and deep penitence into the sympathizing minds of some whom he had known in his earthly life.

We did what we could to help him in this his day of deep darkness. We turned his attention back to some of the acts of his life known to us, which had seemed worthy the name of true beneficence. But this did not seem to afford him much relief; for, as he said, when regarded from his present standpoint of a just self-judgment, these acts would not bear the test of a strict scrutiny, there having been so large a mingling of selfishness in them.

Before leaving us, however, he seemed to be considerably brightened in his condition, and on parting expressed the wish to take my hand, and was about to give me his blessing; when, suddenly recollecting

Digitized by Google

himself, he said that he was not then in a condition to give any one a blessing, but that he now began to have faith that in due time he might *be* a blessing to us and others of his earthly friends.

In closing he charged me to tell the world that he was sorry, and ashamed for his perverted life and disgraceful death, and for the misery he had thus brought upon those dear to him, especially upon a dearly loved daughter.

Soon after, Mrs. Loucks said, "I see a beautiful female spirit coming to his help. She is an earthly love who has been in the spirit-world about thirty years. Her coming is a ray of brightness to him; and yet he shrinks from her advances until he is made sure that she knows, in full, of his present degradation. Indeed, her purity and gentle, loving spirit, seem at first to send him still deeper into the shades of humility and self-reproach. Yet she does by no means shrink from him, but speaks words of kindly encouragement, urging him to bear bravely his marks of degradation until he should be able to cover them over with the garments of truth, beauty, and an earnest beneficence. He might be assured that her help would be with him, but seemingly from a distance at present; until, having at length gained the victory in his own self-struggle, and being thus in a measure fitted for the higher life, he would, through natural law, rise into conditions more closely resembling her own.

Digitized by Google

EFFECTS OF EXCESSIVE GRIEF, ON OUR SPIRIT-FRIENDS.

To-night the seer was not in a right condition to ascend into the higher spirit regions; she could only, as it were, stand upon the first step of the ever-ascending spiral stairway, — that, which was in nearest proximity to the earth-sphere. Here her attention was first called to the condition of a child-spirit just from the earthly home of a loving and now desolate father. So long as this tender yearning of the father-heart continued in its intensity, it was seen that the child was, by natural law, held in close connection with the earth-sphere; and the appointed guardian spirits could not take it to the higher home to which by virtue of its innocence it rightfully belonged.

So doubtless it is in regard to the more mature spirits. They are often held in bondage to the earth-sphere by the intense grief and unyielding longing of friends left behind; and thus their upward progress is stayed for a time.

Another scene attracts the attention of the seer. A fashionable lady, who has had no care for aught but show and frivolity, is now seen in great sadness and suffering. Her charms of person have mostly disappeared; and a pet child, a boy of some sixteen years of age, has just been taken from her by the hand of death. She now begins to think of the possibility of something beyond the present life, and its fashionable frivolities. The invisible spirit child, who

Digitized by Google

has still fast hold upon her heart-strings, is now gently, but strongly, drawing her away from that mere *semblance* of life which hitherto has been hers. And, to the seer, this seemed to be given as a simple illustration of the natural tendency of this kind of earthly affliction: it is the grand working power with which to draw souls away from the lower to a higher life.

This was all of any special significance that conditions would allow of this evening. But before coming wholly out of her spirit-condition, a symbolical key was shown to the seer, which, she was given to understand, indicated the opening of a new door in her advancing mediumistic career; but the exact nature of the coming change was not made apparent to us.

A MASONIC GATHERING IN SPIRIT-LIFE.

This evening our exercises were so extended and interesting, that I utterly despair of doing any thing like justice to them. I will, however, do the best that shall be given me, using, as far as this is possible, the words, as well as the ideas, conveyed by the seer.

"I hail from the earth," she said, after having become fairly fixed in her wonderfully interesting abnormal, or spirit-condition, — "I hail from the earth, and am seeking to understand the higher truths and conditions of your spirit-life, that I may convey their lessons to those still in the mortal form.

"I see vast arches and domes above me. Am I in a cathedral? or is it *any* appointed place of worship? The reply I hear is, that *all* places are places of worship here, — none more so than others.

Digitized by Google

"But I now see mysterious signs, or hieroglyphics; and I ask to know the meaning of these. I myself can not read them, and am told that in order to be able so to do, my initiation should have taken place in the lower or earthly condition.

"I now perceive this to be a place for Masonic gatherings in this higher life; but not now, however, is it any part of the work to exchange mystical signs and grips, or to display a showy regalia. But it is for a simply *spontaneous* gathering of those who, having in the earthly life been associated in the mystic order, but having outgrown its showy superficialities, are now drawn together for purposes of noble and universal beneficence. The mysterious signs at the entrance are, as I am told, used simply to attract the attention of those who had been familiar with them in the earth-life; and thus to draw together congenial workers in an association *somewhat resembling* the Masonic order of their former life.

"One in plain citizen's dress is now speaking, and is listened to with the closest attention. The speaker is Washington himself; and among the hearers I recognize several whose features have become familiar to the readers of illustrated American history, among whom stands prominently forth the well-known face of Nathaniel P. Willis.

"There is no empty show here, or shallow purpose; but all tends toward action, and for the good of the Grand Order of Humanity.

Digitized by Google

A HALL OF DIPLOMACY.

"I now pass farther on, and see a superstructure still more beautiful and imposing. It is named to me as the Hall of Diplomacy, where those meet whose earthly training has especially fitted them to be the guardians and guides of the nations they have left behind. It is not purely an American assemblage, yet I can clearly perceive, from the influence that comes to me in my somewhat distant position, — for conditions do not allow of my *near* approach to this august assemblage, — that the welfare of this nation is, in an especial manner, an object of their counsel and efforts.

"What appear to be bridges, connect this hall with other edifices of smaller dimensions in the near vicinity. One of these is of a pagoda-form, and into this I am now permitted to enter. It is occupied by one individual of great clearness of perception, whose business it is to examine credentials, and to pass the accredited to their seats in the great hall containing the assembled wisdom of the nations.

VISIT TO A SCHOOL IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

"I now descend somewhat in my position, and find myself in an assembly of teachers and pupils; and here I am allowed to witness the methods of instruction in the spirit-life. Old and young I see occupying the same classes; and, strange to say, those of the same average ability, who have not had what is called an education on earth, here promise

Digitized by Google

the most rapid progress. The reason is, that the others have many errors to unlearn, before they are prepared to see and acknowledge the new truths; for here truths *are* clearly seen by open, intuitive minds. For here it is not theories concerning truth, but the truths themselves, that are set before the pupils. The method is more like what we of earth call object-teaching than any other system of instruction.

"A conspicuous example of the false methods of earth now stands before me, in the person of a self-conceited teacher recently from her earthly labors. She does not seem at all to like the method here pursued, and is quite free to criticise what is going on. She is not yet ready to take her proper position among the pupils, but expatiates quite freely on the worth of the old methods of her former life.

"The spirit-teacher does not seem to be at all troubled or discouraged at the blindness and perversity of the self-opinionated novitiate in his school; but rather encourages her to go on and expose the shallowness of her mental condition, which is soon seen by all, but particularly by a bright boy of not more than fourteen years of age, who can hardly restrain himself from *prematurely* setting her right.

"At length the spirit-teacher gives her what seems to be a delicate spray of fern-leaf; when, to her opening vision, there appear to be marks of wisdom in it, that no book of botany ever named; and she now begins to see and acknowledge the superiority of this method, over the one heretofore so firmly fixed in her mind.

Digitized by Google

"Other similar experiments follow, until at length she is fairly transformed into a promising pupil of the spirit-instructor; at which the bright-minded boy appears especially to rejoice, — in sympathy, however; not in the way of triumph.

A HOSPITAL FOR THE AGED AND INFIRM OF MIND.

"Still farther on, in my approach toward the earth, I see what may be called hospitals, for certain aged ones of infirm minds, who do not seem to have had a sufficiency of life-force to become resurrected in the usual natural and easy manner.

"Some of these appeared to have remained partially dormant for a long time; but now — through the great wisdom and care of the attending helpers, who magnetize and work over these torpid ones with especial fidelity — signs of new life and intelligence begin to appear. One of these subjects I perceive to be a Frenchman, who seems to be much gratified at the change that has taken place in his condition. I can understand what he says, though I do not know his language."

Soon after, as she seemed to continue her approach toward the earth, Mrs. Loucks caught sight of one whom she recognized as an old acquaintance. Having at length succeeded in gaining the attention of this friend,— now in the spirit-life, — a pleasant exchange of greetings and some general conversation ensued.

On coming out of her condition, as had often been the case before, the most enthusiastic expressions

Digitized by Google

were uttered in regard to the grandeur, the glory, and extent of the regions of which our seer had thus caught a magnificent glimpse.

HOMES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

The opening words of this evening were, "I have entered a hamlet in the spirit-life, the houses of which are all open at the sides, the timbers only being visible, — making them look much like bird-cages. These are the natural outgrowths of the earthly lives of the occupants, who were simple and honest-minded, with nothing to be concealed. There is a light and genial atmosphere in this hamlet, which is quite pleasant to my perceptions.

"Farther on, and in what *seems* to be a higher position, I see a very differently constructed house. It is entirely closed up, with the exception of one open door at the front. It has a dark and repelling look, both outside and in, so far as I am permitted to see. A tall, dark-looking woman comes to the door, and asks, 'What are you looking in here for?' I reply that I am seeking for knowledge, that I may be of benefit to those still in the earth-life. 'Will you allow me to enter your house, that I may gain a lesson here also?' She finally consents, on seeing my honest sincerity in the matter. I find her occupied with trivial, childlike affairs, such as the dressing and care of dolls, small bead-work, and other similar matters. I try to show her that such occupations are unworthy of one who has faculties in all respects the same in kind as the best of the other sex."

Digitized by Google

Here followed an earnest address from the seer to the woman, the object of which was to arouse her to a sense of her degraded position, and into an active and independent individuality. The success of the appeal seemed to be but partial; for the woman still appeared to be much inclined to remain in her prison-like subjection to the one who is still her lordly husband, after the old order of the earthly life. The close-built house expressed his desire to keep her in bondage and ignorance; and the apparent elevation above the position of the hamlet just described, was *only* apparent, and resulted from the natural habits of the owner, who had been a mountaineer in his earthly life; and hence now, in the spirit-life, he had found for his habitation a position corresponding to his former one. But, morally speaking, his position was in reality much lower than was that of the dwellers in the hamlet. He himself was apparently absent at the time of the visit, after the usual vagrant wandering way of such persons; but would return in due time, and claim the services of his woman-slave. The seer was given to understand that she would revisit this place for further observation.

CHILD-SPORTS AND THEIR USES.

A group of child-spirits next attracts my attention. They are all alive with frolic, after the manner of our earthly children. Some of them are engaged with drums, banners, and mimic parades, after the old way of imitating the warlike customs of their elders in the earth-life. But all this is only for a while, only

Digitized by Google

long enough for an easy transition from that which has naturally followed them from the earth into the lower conditions of the spirit-life. They will soon grow out of this into that which is higher, and more in harmony with their final destiny. Even now some of them seem to be getting weary of these inferior kinds of show and recreation. One young girl I see, who was about being crowned their May-queen, with the natural personal vanity of such an occasion, when all at once she seems to catch a glimpse of something higher, and more worthy of her capacities; and now she has turned away from that which before attracted and satisfied her.

"And thus these youthful ones, under the eye of a wise and careful teacher, soon pass on into the higher and far more instructive scenes of the spirit-life. It is indeed wonderful, and greatly rejoices my heart, to see how these spirit-children are guarded and guided in their upward course. Oh, would that our earthly schools could be thus wisely and lovingly conducted! I feel very earnest upon this point, and finally ask the noble spirit-teacher if he can not bring one of his prepared bands so into contact with the earthly groups of school-children, as thus to help them somewhat out of their unpropitious conditions into states more in harmony with theirs. The reply is, that this is always done; that as soon as one of his child-classes is rightly prepared, it is taken as nearly as possible into helping relations with the schools and play-grounds of the earthly life.

Digitized by Google

HOMES OF THE RED MEN.

"And now I am passing near to a region wholly inhabited by Indian spirits of rather a low and inactive order. Efforts are being made from the higher condition to reach and redeem these, and not without a good measure of success. From time to time, those who may be called missionaries come near to these ignorant and torpid ones, and by a certain magnetic attraction draw away portions of them, and take them into a kind of service, in which are included large efforts at instruction. After a due course of training, these reformed Indian spirits become quite useful helpers, especially to those beneficent healers who are now so active in alleviating the sufferings and curing the maladies of our earthly humanity.

"There is one of these Indian spirits who seems to be of higher grade than the others, who comes to me with a bright-looking pappoose in his arms, of which he has evidently high hopes and expectations. He thinks that the child is to be a seer, and is active in every possible way to help the little one to 'more brightness,' as he calls it; and, to this end, he asks me to put my hands on its head. But not much help comes in this way, though I have the perception that such earnest effort on his part — a true prayer I think it is — will not wholly fail of its object.

Digitized by Google

ARISTOCRACY AND CASTE IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD

And now a vision of aristocracy and caste in the spirit-world, the locality of which seemed to be in near proximity to the British realm.

"I see what appears to be the outline of a very large superstructure, an outline which is intended to represent the various grades of caste in a modern monarchy. It is but a faint and lingering shadow of what exists upon the earth, but which here in the spirit-life can never exist as a substantial reality, but in its every trace must soon vanish into the wide realm of eternal and equal justice to all.

"And now these architectural outlines, which appear much like the foundation of a large and complicated building, are seen to be alive with the various orders of caste, arranged at first much as had been the case with them in the earthly life, from which most of them have recently been removed.

"But the fixedness of the lines of distinction soon begins to waver, and the different classes are seen to be fast coming into a closer and often a disturbing contact. My attention is especially called to one of high rank; a duke he was upon earth, of the nearest approach to royalty. From some casual remark made in his presence, he has just come to a practical knowledge that the man who once blacked his boots now stands upon the same social platform with himself, and that in order to rise into that actual superiority of which, from his natural capacity, he is capable, he, the former duke, must take his position in

Digitized by Google

the common ranks, and industriously work his way upward even as do others. The conviction astounds him at first; but, with the light now given him, he is soon able to understand the justness and fitness of the law impelling him, and to turn his attention faithfully to his work.

"And now to my extended perception it appears that many of the nobility of the earth's past history have thus risen not only to a clear perception of their former mistake, but have also become active agents in overthrowing the same unjust distinctions still prevailing in the earthly life."

After this there seemed to be open to the vision of the seer a clairvoyant perception of the condition of several of the nations of Europe. These, from causes thus set at work in the spirit-world, were soon to be shaken to the very center. A great overturn, it was clearly seen, must soon take place, and the lower world thus become transformed more into harmony with the rule of absolute justice as found in the upper spirit-spheres.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V.

SPIRIT SIGHTS AND SYMBOLS. — A LOVE-SCENE IN THE SPIRIT-LIFE.

A LOVE-SCENE now, the first we have had presented to us. As usual, I will as far as possible, give the words as well as ideas of the seer: —

"One is now before me who seems to have been a military officer in the earthly life. He is in a reclining position, and at his head stands a lovely woman who has come from the high conditions of the spirit-life. In her hand she holds a bouquet of sweet, delicate flowers. These, one by one, she is taking out, and giving the internal meaning of to her companion; who at first does not seem much interested in the process. But gradually he begins to see *some* of the hidden beauties which are thus brought before his somewhat dulled sensibilities. This he confesses; and then says to his lovely teacher, — at the same time extending his arm, and encircling her waist, — that since, according to her teaching, all things have their hidden as well as their external meaning, he should be still more interested if he might know the inner sense of the loveliness and language of his companion and teacher.

Digitized by Google

"To this somewhat playful and personal sally, the reply is, 'All within me is yours that you are capable of understanding and receiving; more than this it is impossible for me to convey to you in word or thought.' Then, laying her hand upon his head, — first upon the region of ideality, then upon that of sublimity, — she says, 'If *these* were called more into action, you would be able to see more deeply into truths and beauties of all kinds. Do you not begin to perceive some change in that direction even now, as I am standing by you?' Then, in answer to his question why her influence is so gentle, penetrating, and elevating, the reply is, that it is because her life has been more in harmony with nature's laws, — she having avoided those artificial and baneful habits to which he had been a subject.

"To all this the man replies: 'I begin now to understand that my life upon the earth was a great mistake, and that therefore I am but poorly fitted to enter upon that which should be far higher and better. Why even now can not I see the beauties that you see in those flowers and other things lovely and deep in nature?' She now shows him, still more clearly, that it is owing largely to his former habits, — especially in the use of narcotics and stimulants, — that he is thus left blinded to much that is grand and lovely now around him."

And to the seer, the difference between these two spirit-forms is of the most marked character, — the one being of refined and compact particles, radiating clearness and beauty; whilst the other seems made

Digitized by Google

up of loosely organized material, and all through it could be seen, filling the open pores, a dark substance, which could be clearly traced as the result of former evil practices. All this, he was given to understand, must be eliminated from his present organism, before it would be possible for him to rise into the higher conditions; and this could only be done by earnest and active effort both in his own behalf, and for those he had left behind, under similar conditions of slavery to evil. "'And now,' says his lovely visitant, — 'now that you have found out the work you have to do, I must leave you. And, when that work is faithfully done, you will come to me.'

"At this declaration, sad surprise and disappointment seize hold upon him; and he feels that he *can not* have it so, as he had depended upon her loving presence to aid him in the work. But she, waving her hand gracefully but decisively, as she departs, replies, that this would not do; for no one can be entitled to the rewards of self-conquest, without the *individual* struggle and victory." And this, we were told, is a law of universal application.

PROPHETIC VISION OF A RELIGIOUS WAR.

The following grand prophetic vision was given to us on the evening of Feb. 21, 1876. It does not claim to be an infallible foreshadowing of the future; but is intended simply to represent the prophetic impressions of advanced minds in the spirit-life, from their present outlook upon human affairs.

"I see a large gathering of people looking with

Digitized by Google

wonder and admiration toward the west. Now I see what it is that attracts their attention. A large red-looking cloud (signifying blood) is hanging over the western horizon; and out from this cloud, toward the north, the east, and the south, are seen hands that appear to beckon with warning gesture; and voices are heard saying, 'Come, let us reason together.' A dark and terrible crisis is manifestly at hand, affecting more particularly this western nation, — the vanguard of freedom in the progress of the world.

"And now appear arms in the hands of many, some even of those beckoning from the spirit-world; whilst others still plead for peace. But the general cry is, 'We have waited long, and in vain: there is no other way.' A terrible storm of conflict must come before the religious atmosphere can be purified and made fit for the breathing of free and advancing souls.

"Now from out of the distance appear the gathering hosts of the religious despots and their victims; the van of which is made up of the compactly organized battalions of the Roman Catholic Church. The movement has begun in a foreign land; but as it advances it gains strength from the blinded adherents in our own land, which is now to be the arena of a war more terrible even than that which attended the downfall of physical bondage.

"The conflict comes; but who shall attempt its full description, with all its terrible details of suffering and death? . . .

Digitized by Google

"The liberal hosts have conquered; and the scattered forces of religious bigotry and violence are driven back to their strongholds. But they do not, as yet, give up their scheme of the conquest, or extermination of heresy and dissent. Again they rally; again they advance. And this time they carry with them a banner of strange and insulting device. It is of a blood-red ground; and on it is pictured a leading church prelate, — the genius, apparently, of the movement. By his side, led with a chain and held by an iron collar, is seen a lank and scraggy wolf, — the dog being too noble an animal to represent their estimation of their opponents, whose conquest they now seem sure of. Great enthusiasm seems to result from this significant device, so craftily prepared by the leaders. But the desperate rally is in vain. The hosts of freedom and progress are again victorious; whilst the leaders and minions of oppression and spiritual darkness are driven back, to return in open force no more forever.[1]

"I now ask to get a glimpse of the kind of government which should take the place of the old order of things under which came up this religious conflict and final triumph. I am enabled, however, to see but a little way in that direction; but one thing is prominently before my vision: the system of taxation seems to be almost wholly superseded by a just and economical government, so simply and wisely administered, that the friction of the machinery can scarcely be perceived.

[1] That is, to this country. On foreign shores, it was intimated that it might be long before such wars would cease.

Digitized by Google

"The governmental agents are to be but few, and of those who act strictly and conscientiously for the people whom they represent. They are inspirational men, who receive their wisdom from the unseen world; and they dare not act selfishly, conscious as they are at all times of the near presence of the wise and the good who have gone before. Thus, in this new order of things, the reins of government are to extend far upward into the regions of exalted wisdom and love."

In answer to a question, Shall women vote then? the reply was, "Woman must have a voice in government when she has learned her power."

Subsequently, on going through with our usual review, the seer being in her abnormal condition, the accuracy of my report was confirmed with especial emphasis. Also, in reply to my inquiries, it was re-affirmed most decisively, that, from the outlook of those who gave the vision, it was very clear that something of the kind must take place; and that soon, as the opening contentions were already rife on both continents. It was likewise said that, although sad to contemplate, yet that great good would be the final result; that indeed, in no other way could the higher advance in governmental affairs take place, excepting in such a fearful upheaval of the religious world.

In closing this interview, the controlling intelligence said, "We have now given you, imperfectly it is true, yet just in its main features, a representation of individual and of political evils, — the one being

Digitized by Google

an epitome of the other, — and the imperative law by which they are to be overcome."

MORE OF INDIAN LIFE IN THE SPHERES.

First an earnest prayer on the part of the seer, that her great privilege of a visit to the scenes of spirit-life might not be for any selfish purpose, but that she might be the means of good to those whom she might visit. Then, as if in immediate answer to her prayer, she was made to say, —

"I now seem to be descending into the homes of the red men, and soon come upon a group who appear to have recently come from the earth-life. There is apparently a large mingling of the white man's blood in their life. They are a remnant of the Narragansett tribe, I think.

"And now descends to this group a rather stately and pretentious-looking personage, who claims to have a special mission from the Great Spirit to them. In short, he has come to find out how many of them belong to the elect, that their names may be registered in the 'Lamb's book of life.' But the simple, unsophisticated sons of the forest do not seem to be much impressed or awed at the imposing message. They look at each other, and talk in a low voice, some of them saying, 'It is a white man's trick: it is no good for red men.'

"The self-elevated missionary soon sees that he can not impress these simple-minded ones as to the truth and importance of his claims, and disappears from view."

Digitized by Google

Then the seer herself is moved to go near, and speak to them of the good Father and his kindly care for *all* his children, the red man as well as the white. They soon become interested, especially when she tells them that this good Father — the Great Spirit of their earthly faith — is *in* them, often speaking to them, telling them of the good and of the bad; and so helping them to grow wise and true, and thus be fitted to do good to such as need their help.

One bright-looking squaw seems to listen with especial attention, and to understand and appreciate all that is said, excepting that about helping others. She don't exactly know about that; thinks that all should take care of themselves, just as she takes care of herself. But, by dint of special explanation and persuasion, this squaw is finally induced to make a trial, saying, "Me go tell 'em.' So after being charged that she must *feel kindly*, as well as "tell 'em" what they need, she goes forth to her simple and novel work. She soon finds that the doing of good to others is the very way to make the inner voice speak more clearly to her; and so she is finally made active and happy in her work. And thus the seer leaves her — a natural and successful worker for the elevation of her own people.

IN HADES, PREACHING.

Now the scene changes, and the seer says, —

"A far different scene is now before me, — a scene dark and terrible to my perceptions. Here is degradation of the lowest stamp. Depraved conditions,

Digitized by Google

coming from various unpropitious surroundings in the earthly life, here find their culmination; and the gathering of vicious forces is so dark and revolting, that it seems well-nigh impossible for any redeeming influences to reach the unhappy victims. And yet I am determined to try."

Her appeal is now direct: "Why, oh! why is it, that you are contented with such dark and disturbed surroundings, when there is so much of brightness and peace above you?" One says in reply, "Why, we *love* these our gamblings, our fightings, and all that you see going on so jolly." Another, with a shade of thoughtfulness on his brow, approaches, and says that he has always been in such company, and does not know of any thing better. To him the seer speaks long and earnestly, in words that seem not wholly in vain.[1]

But the work before her is large, and calls for immediate action. She must have help; so, in response to her earnest prayer, a band of bright sister-spirits descend to her aid. The work is one, the repelling difficulty of which nothing but the purity and gentle love of the higher life can overcome; but with *these* there is no such thing as a final failure. So these sisters labor on, until the last and most desperate case is reached, and put in the way of recovery.

And now these partially redeemed victims of error and vice are so raised to the general view, that they

[1] In this, as in many similar instances, although given in full at the time by the seer, I found myself unable to repeat the exact words, and so have not made the attempt.

Digitized by Google

are made to serve as an illustration of the power of good over evil. A class of fastidious-looking students come forward, they having been witnesses of the recent successful effort, and upon whom it seems to have made some impression. They seem *now* to think, that since these gentle and pure spirits could thus approach and conquer the lowest debasement without personal contamination, it is possible that they also might venture upon a similar work. Our seer talks bravely and pointedly to these, until finally they seem to be getting quite ashamed of their fastidious inaction, she saying to them, "It is, no doubt, a fine thing to be the receivers of wise instruction; but I trust that the time will soon come when you will know by experience, that it is more blessed to give than to receive."

A PLEASANT AND INSTRUCTIVE EPISODE.

Our opening this evening was as follows, the address being directly to myself: —

"I beg your pardon for this intrusion; and yet it is not an intrusion, for I have the permission of your spirit-band to come and give a brief episode of my own experience, which may have an important bearing on an existing error in regard to the laws of transition from your earth-sphere to ours of the higher life.

"It seems to be generally thought with you, that a cessation of consciousness, however brief, must necessarily take place at the time of the transition. But this I know from happy experience is not the case; for at my own transition the entire process was clearly and minutely watched by my conscious self, as calmly and quietly as is the breathing of an infant. And at each step leading still more out of the material into the spiritual organism, an increasing *ecstasy* — for no other word can rightly

Digitized by Google

express the feeling — infolded the consciousness still more and more in its enrapturing embrace. No experience of mortal life can be justly compared with this, excepting perhaps that of a successful entrancement to the subject of it.

"It is true that in certain exceptional cases, prompted by some unnatural cause in the individual history, unconsciousness may exist for a very long period, reaching even to centuries in some extreme instances. But in most cases, as they usually prevail, the unconsciousness is of very brief duration, and even this is simply a kind of magnetic condition induced by beneficent spirit attendants to protect the subject from the painfully exciting scenes which are of very frequent occurrence at what is called the death-bed. But the greatest quiet should prevail at that time; and if this could be maintained, and if the previous life of the departing individual has been reasonably in harmony with natural law, then the departure might be one of a quiet and conscious unrobing one's self of the coarser outer garment, and amid the most delightful surroundings imaginable. And here I wish to say that my own happy experience in this respect, was owing largely to the fact, that when my departure took place I was entirely alone, so far as mortal company was concerned; my attendant having left me for some brief purpose, and during this absence my release was rather unexpectedly and quickly accomplished.

"And now I would make this as a very important suggestion: if the friends present on such occasions find themselves unable to practice the quiet self-control so essential to the easy release, or rather the delightful *ebbing away* of mortal life, they had better by far wholly leave the room until the joyful transition is over.

"I regard these thoughts, and also my own positive testimony upon the subject, as having an important bearing upon the well-being of humanity; and I should therefore be greatly obliged if you would take such means as may be at your command to bring them to the public notice."

[1] Published accordingly in the Banner of Light of April 15, 1876.

Digitized by Google

Then comes what follows, which, notwithstanding its somewhat private and personal character, I give that others as well as myself may be benefited by the wisely adapted lesson it contains: —

"It may rejoice you to know that there is a gentle and loving woman standing near you, who says she was once your earthly companion. She gives me greetings of love for you, with this message: 'Love, order, and harmony are your necessities. You must endeavor so to embody these in your inner being, that you will not be disturbed by the opposites in your external surroundings.'"

The influence of the intelligence from whom and through whom the above communications were given was very pleasant to both the seer and myself. What he said also seems to be in harmony with the simplicity and clearness of elevated wisdom. He declined giving his earthly name, as being unimportant; but, in giving me his farewell benediction, he called himself "a brother in the ministry."

LOVE AND ITS RELATIONS HERE AND IN THE HEREAFTER.

The rest of this evening's work, as well as the whole of the preceding, related to the great subjects of love, marriage, and the right generation of children. Circumstances prevented me from writing out at the time what was thus given us; but with the aid of my impressional capacity, which I am fully conscious is effectually used in such cases, I feel that I shall now be able to recall the essential parts of

Digitized by Google

what was received, that the important thoughts imparted may not be wholly lost to others, should our intention of giving the results of our labors to the public be carried out.

On the first of these evenings there was a vision as follows: —

"I see a grand, patriarchal-looking tree of vastly extended dimensions. But instead of the usual foliage of green, its branches and leaves are transparent, and glisten with the translucent light of the spirit-atmosphere.

"Now I perceive that this tree symbolizes the human family; that, even as the life-current of the tree pervades every twig and leaflet, so the divine spirit of love should pervade every pulsation of human life. And as no branch or twig of this symmetrical tree can be injured without marring its general beauty and perfection, so can no member of the family of man, however insignificant, be injured without the infliction of a similar injury upon humanity at large."

And now followed a most interesting discourse concerning the relations of the sexes, true and false, and the results of the same, from which I recall and record as follows: —

All souls, by virtue of their original constitution, are rightly mated; or, in other words, each has a true counterpart *somewhere* within the ranges of human life. But, under our present imperfect conditions, such rightly-mated ones but seldom meet and blend their lives whilst still in this earthly and preliminary

Digitized by Google

state. When, however, they at length enter the spirit-world, and thus come more directly under the control of the law of spiritual attractions, they begin to be drawn strongly toward, and must eventually find, each other; and then ever after they remain as one.

It is true that each has his or her especial and appropriate work to do, and in doing this they may sometimes be said to be *apart*, but they are never *separated*. This is even as is the case when our hands and arms are used: they may be extended more or less widely apart, but they are still *united* in the truest sense, the sensations of both being still impressed upon a common brain-center.

The special delights of this perfect union of the sexes in the spirit-world consist mainly of mental and spiritual ecstasies somewhat like those resulting from a harmony of sounds or colors in the earthly life, only *intensified* and to a degree wholly inconceivable by those still in the mortal body. Such wonderful experiences are the natural results of perfectly blended and highly refined spiritual adaptations; and they may be regarded as the final heritage of every human being. It is true that in a large proportion of instances, centuries of our earthly time may elapse before the perfection of this state may be reached; but it must finally be the realized destiny of all.

It was also declared that the time would come when the earth and the spirit conditions would be brought so nearly together, that there would be an

Digitized by Google

almost constant blending of the personal experiences of those in each; in other words, when the now extraordinary gifts of our present seer would become the rule rather than exception. *Then* truly mated souls would so feel the unerring force of spiritual laws, even while on the earth, that they would find each other though born into life in the most widely separated lands. Toward this condition the human race is now slowly but surely progressing; and nothing can be better fitted to hasten the tendency, than a right understanding and practice of the laws of sexual life.

A ZEALOT SPEAKS UPON THE SUBJECT.

The second of the evenings also opened with a vision as follows:—

"I seem to be at the lower extreme of a long procession, made up of all conditions and ages, all aiming at a special point of interest, which seems to be at a summit in the distance. A gay and careless disposition prevails with most, until a given point in the progress is reached; when all seem struck with a sad or serious look. As this point of experience has already been passed by me [alluding to an incident already given, and interpreted as something like a personal day of judgment], I leave it behind, and go on to the summit; and here is opened before me a most appalling view of the sad condition of the earth, in regard to that most important event in human life, — the coming together of the sexes in what *should be* for a right propagation of the race."

Digitized by Google

At this point Mrs. Loucks was directly and positively controlled by a spirit, hitherto unknown to us, who was, as it were, the sentinel of the post. His zeal seemed to be raised to the highest pitch of enthusiastic, almost *fanatical* denunciation of the glaring and ruinous abuses in this respect, prevailing so generally in the earthly life. His manner was quite oratorical and vehement, — very different indeed from the usual methods of speech exhibited through this mediumistic channel. He seemed to look wholly on the dark side of the abuse in question, denouncing those as criminals, who, not being of serious mind and sound body, should dare to take the responsibility of bringing into life similar unsound specimens of humanity. Such was the general strain of quite an extended discourse, of which I am now able to give only this very imperfect report.

I felt strongly impressed to take issue with this perhaps somewhat over-zealous spirit, in regard to some of his extreme positions; and, after some little discussion of the matter, he was finally led to acknowledge that in *some respects* his utterances might require modification.

The particular view of the case presented by myself was somewhat like this: if it be indeed true, as has already been given us, that the starting-point of individualized life is only in preliminary worlds like our own, and through means which, like all other of our earthly gifts, are liable to great abuse; still, taking life as a whole, — extending indefinitely as it does into the higher and ever-brightening regions of

Digitized by Google

the spirit-world, — is not, after all, *any* beginning of life a beneficence to the individual subject? and, if so, can those, even of very imperfect conditions, who, following blindly the instincts of nature, thus present to the world undesirable additions to our race, be justly denounced as criminals? On the contrary, is there not a high wisdom seen even in the very darkest of this blind action of human instinct; since the evils are but temporary, and disciplinary or educational in their nature, whilst the benefits are of a positive and ever-enduring character?

Before concluding our *séance*, in response to my call the leading intelligence of our band came, and made the needed explanations and modifications. It was thus said that the control of to-night was entirely a new one, whose work was very important, notwithstanding the strong tendency toward extremes manifested. Other explanatory remarks followed, which seemed to leave the matter rightly modified and confirmed.

SPECIAL PRIVILEGE DAY.

This evening, owing to the somewhat exhausted condition of the seer, the special effort intended to be made was omitted, and quite a different turn given to our exercises. The occasion was called "special privilege day," by the controlling intelligence of our band; and quite a number of those more or less nearly connected with it, and from whom heretofore we had received nothing of a direct and personal character, were now permitted to come and try their powers of controlling and communicating through the mediumistic capacity of our seer.

Digitized by Google

First came her niece Ella, who had passed into the spirit-life many years ago, — an infant of only four days old. She had now, through her education in the spirit-spheres, become quite intelligent and progressed. But, although thus greatly matured and advanced as to her real character and position, yet when coming, as now, into earthly nearness to friends, she assumed — naturally, doubtless, if not necessarily — the character of a young and playful child. So now she tried to tell us all about the schools she had been going to, although by way of correction she said that it was really *all* school to herself and companions in that happy life, as they always had a teacher with them to point out the beauties, the composition, and uses of the objects of interest ever around them. Much more was said in a similar strain, — it being a singular and very interesting mingling of a high wisdom with the winning simplicity of childhood.

Then came one who evidently failed in the attempted control, and soon gave place to a shrewd but honest Irishman, who had much to say about the church to which he had belonged in his earthly life. He still seemed to retain somewhat largely of his former attachment to the old church. He now thought that it was all right as to its *real and true self*. Still he admitted that so much crookedness and corruption had got into it, that he did not think much of the old church as it now is. At length, after holding a somewhat lengthy and humorous conversation with me, he finally came to the con-

Digitized by Google

clusion, that, if all the rotten timbers were to be taken out of it, what would remain would be hardly worth preserving.

Next came a kind, motherly colored woman, who, as to her earthly condition, had been a slave until about twelve years previous to her entrance to the spirit-world. She had had a kind mistress, however, who finally set her free; and then — somewhat to her surprise — she had found the world harder for her than while she was a slave. But still she did by no means regret the change, as she knew that freedom was better for her than slavery, even if it was harder for her to get along in that way. At any rate, she did not see why freedom was not just as good for the black as for the white.

Both of these last said that they were connected with our band as the special servants or helpers of the higher controlling intelligences, and that there were many more employed in the same capacity.

The more important work of these subordinate helpers was to keep a watch over the seer, or medium, so as to shield her capacity from injurious intrusions during the absence of the wisely ordered controlling intelligences of our band. It was the shrewd and intelligent Irish spirit who gave me this last item of intelligence. But he seemed to think that there was an important distinction between this and the usual service of the earthly life; for here, as he said, he was not required to act blindly in matters of duty, but was permitted to see and understand the most of what he was required to do.

Digitized by Google

Both of these spirit-persons exhibited very striking personal peculiarities, and also decided marks of integrity and fidelity, — characteristics especially suited to their work.

The rest of the evening was devoted to a most delightful intercourse with near personal friends, now of the spirit-realms, — a privilege which only comes to us at somewhat rare intervals. But such details belong not to the general public.

In closing, it was announced by the controlling influence, that a cessation of our efforts would now take place for a short time, for needed rest and recreation.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI.

HEALING HELPS OF THE HEREAFTER. — AN ASYLUM FOR THE UNFORTUNATE.

"I AM now," said the seer, "to visit some of the hospitals, or healing helps of the spirit-world. The first of these seems to be located over the equatorial parts of the earth. It is what might be called an asylum for the unbalanced of mind, who had also been somewhat crippled in body whilst in the earth-life.

"What appears to be an ambulance is now before me. It has all the usual appliances for controlling such a vehicle, and there seem to be real horses attached to it. Also it has the appearance of being drawn upon a solid surface like the earth.

"In this ambulance are to be seen persons in the various stages of monomania, or some kind of disarrangement of normal conditions. And, although the difficulty is now mainly of a mental character, yet the old bodily disability is still with many of the subjects, but simply as a hallucination of the spirit-life.

"These persons I see in various positions; some reclining, some lying down, and some sitting up, though quite languidly.

Digitized by Google

"But I now perceive that these invalids do not properly belong to this locality, as the elements needed by them are not to be found here. Hence they are being driven away in that ambulance, into regions better fitted to their condition.

. . . "What splendidly beautiful scenery is that in which they have now arrived! Its effects upon me are inspiring in the extreme; and I do not wonder, as I observe the effects upon the invalids. One of them is actually getting upon his feet! and others, stimulated by the same buoyant atmosphere, and by his exclamations of surprise and delight, soon follow his example; and so on, until all are so vitalized by the bracing air and the beautiful surroundings, that they leave the ambulance, being now abundantly able to use the natural locomotion of the spirit-body.

"All but one are now gone; some of them being seen rejoicing and frolicking in the distance. But this poor man is still lying, in almost utter stupidity, at the bottom of the ambulance. It seems almost as if his were a hopeless case. A soldier was he, wounded, and finally dying of starvation in the Libby Prison. What *can* I do for him? I will go near, and try to arouse him with my human voice; for it may be that this will do what all the spirit-appliances have thus far failed to accomplish."

Now followed an earnest and direct appeal to the unfortunate victim. As in other cases of a somewhat similar character, the memory of the past suffering still remained with this poor soldier, but only as a

Digitized by Google

mental illusion, the actual having passed away with the earthly body. He was still haunted with the thought that he was starving and about to die. And to drive this thought away from his enfeebled and bewildered mind, all was said that could be said by our seer; and finally with effect; for the poor fellow is at length made to see that he is no longer starving in an earthly prison, but is now a freed and triumphant spirit.

And, now that the use of the ambulance was ended, it seemed gradually to dissolve and disappear.

Immediately after, the seer returns to the main hospital locality, and is allowed somewhat closely to examine its condition and methods of action. She finds that the leading idea is to allow the morbidly conditioned to *work out* their hallucination in as easy and natural a way as possible.

Several illustrations of this were given in detail, only one of which I will attempt to repeat. A man with a large inventive genius, and decidedly mediumistic, was so impressed in a certain direction by those of similar tendencies in the spirit-life, that, not having the appliances within his reach for the accomplishment of the desired end, he becomes mentally unbalanced, and leaves the earth a monomaniac. But on his entrance into the spirit-life, being taken into this wisely-adapted sanitary home, and being here furnished with the means of going through with his perplexing problem, the work is soon done, and he finds the needed rest and change. Other wisely-directed exercises of his powers follow, until eventually all is cleared up and rightly balanced.

Digitized by Google

A REFUGE FOR CHILD-SPIRITS.

Another vision in the words of the seer:—

"I seem to be descending the slope of a hill. Now I come to a river. It is not deep, and the waters are clear and sparkling. I am helped over by invisible hands. Now I ascend an opposite slope until I come to a lake, or large pond. Now I pass rapidly on, in close connection with the earth-scenery, until I approach the ocean. Here, located near to the earth, even within its atmosphere, I see a hospital, or a remedial institution, very different from the other. It is for infants of premature birth, whose condition is not sufficiently advanced to enable them rightly to appropriate the nutriment of the spirit-atmosphere. Hence they have to remain for a while in close proximity to the earthly means of growth, until their forms are sufficiently matured to allow of their being taken into the higher regions of the spirit-life, where, by virtue of their innocence, they properly belong.

"What an interesting sight is before me! That kind, motherly matron, or nurse, how tenderly and lovingly does she minister to the frail constitution of the little ones of her charge! I want some of them to come to me. I want this one, and that, and then another; but especially do I want that smallest one of all, who is held so closely to the matron's bosom. But she seems unwilling to let me have *that* one, though all the others are freely at my disposal. So I see that even here are favorites, as is the case with us of earth. But, on being told that I have some-

Digitized by Google

thing to give it, she finally puts the little one in my arms for a moment; and it thus receives a much needed magnetism of the earthly kind, for which, more than for all else, it was pining.

"I ask the matron if she does not want me for an assistant; but she says it is not time yet for me to take up that kind of work, but that I have something more important to do while I retain my bodily connection with the earth.

"When I ask her what would be the result if these imperfectly embodied little ones were to be *immediately* taken to their higher condition, without this special treatment within the atmosphere and influences of the earth, her reply is, that they would then dwindle, rather than expand in their forms, until there should be left no sufficient enshrinement for an immortal life."

ARE ALL HUMAN LIFE-GERMS IMMORTAL?

In the answer as given above, it seems to be implied that there is a *possibility* of a non-immortality of some of the immature forms of infant life. From subsequent inquiry, especially when in communication with wise ones of the spirit-life, I have been led to results which I will now briefly state.

All corporeal forms of human life must find their origin in this, or some other of the material worlds of the universe, which may be regarded as the seed-beds of individual and rational life; incarnated, as such must be, through the process of conception and birth, — dual parents, being the essential agents of

Digitized by Google

the work. The life-spark itself is an emanation from the infinite Sun of the spiritual universe; but the human individualization is found to take place at the very moment of a full and healthy conception. From this time the germ retains its individual life-force; there being henceforth, with certain possible exceptions, no such thing as death or annihilation; but only growth and expansion into still higher conditions of life, especially as it is found in the illimitable Beyond.

But this careful preservation and sure growth of the individual life-germs — received, as they often are, in their immaturity into the spirit-world — are secured only through wisely adapted and faithfully administered means. But so wise and complete is the provision thus made in the spirit-spheres, that a failure from this source is well-nigh impossible.

There is, however, another reason why a full embodiment of the human form — and with this the perfection of the life-principle — may fail as to its perfect results; and that is the want of a fullness of healthy life-force as primarily imparted to the embryonic germ itself. In other words, from various inauspicious causes, the life-spark thus imparted may be so frail and flickering, that extinguishment, not expansion, may be the final result; and this in spite of all the gentle care that may be given to it as it is received into the prepared conditions of the spirit-life.

The conclusion thus reached is, that although an ever-expanding personal being, from the earliest

Digitized by Google

stages of conception, is the general law, yet in certain unpropitious and rare instances it is possible that the opposite may be the result.

"ICHABOD."

Unfavorable conditions again, which interfered with the higher efforts constantly kept in view by our band. So now comes one whose special work seems to be to throw a cheerful, sometimes an amusing influence around us. This spirit calls himself "Ichabod," and is often with us, apparently to drive away depression and to give a needed buoyancy to mental conditions. I give the substance of this one instance as a sample of his general method of doing *his* work for us.

Obtaining a direct control of the medium, he at first spoke in a pompous and oratorical style, fitted to lead me into a momentary belief that some new and important unseen influence had visited us. But soon there was a decided and somewhat ludicrous collapse into the usual style of Ichabod, when he spoke about as follows: —

"Somehow, ever since I have been connected with this band, I have felt strongly inclined to use once more my powers of speech, even if I did have to borrow the organs of another for the purpose. And some time I mean to take this medium out into the public, and make her give up her foolish fears, and *speak out* some of the lessons she has been receiving. I myself feel very much like speaking out the thoughts of my mind, that I may have room to get others in!

Digitized by Google

And some time I mean to have a medium of my own, that I may do so. But here I am only Ichabod, come to put the machine in order."

The effort, however, did not succeed to the extent required; so we were compelled to do without our higher lesson for the present.

A CLAIRVOYANT VISIT TO EARTHLY KINDRED.

The first thing accomplished this evening was a visit, clairvoyantly or otherwise, of Mrs. Loucks to her brother in New Hampshire. She seemed to have a long talk with him on spiritual subjects. Some of the details of this talk she gave to me after her return to the normal condition. It is probable, that, to the brother, the visitation seemed to be only a dream; as, making due allowance for the variation of time, it must have been after the usual bedtime at her brother's home.

Other instances of a similar character have occurred in our experience, from all of which I have reason to believe in the general correctness of Mrs. Loucks's clairvoyant vision, if indeed she does not actually visit *in spirit* the earthly as well as the heavenly scenes described by her.

OUR SPIRIT FRIENDS FORMING ACQUAINTANCESHIP.

After this, we had some pleasant visits from spirit friends, among the more especially prominent of whom were my wife in the spirit-world and Mrs. Loucks's mother. The former of these was seen standing with her hand upon my shoulder, and telling the

Digitized by Google

latter that I was her husband in her earthly life, which was the reason of her present nearness to me.

The other responded by telling how long she had been in the spirit-world, and how little was known of any such methods of return whilst she was in the body-form; and hence, for a long time after her entrance here, she was almost *agonizing* for some way in which she could reach the friends she had left behind.

This was the first time we had received a direct visit from Mrs. Loucks's mother; and hence, as seems probable, it was the first time she had been brought into direct personal contact with my own spirit-friends, with one of whom, as we have just seen, she had thus improved the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted, in the natural and easy manner of such circumstances, prevailing, as we may reasonably infer, in the spirit as well the earthly condition.

Before closing, Mrs. Loucks had a beautifully significant vision for her own encouragement. She saw herself looking small, like a child, yet with a very large floral crown over her head. She was told that she would yet grow as to her spiritual life, so that the magnificent crown would fit her, and be her portion.

SILENT SÉANCES, AND WHY.

Our last two *séances*, including the one of this evening, have been passed almost wholly in silence. Near the close of this, the bright and lively Ella came, and said that she had been sent to tell us why it was that we had been obliged to remain so silent

Digitized by Google

and stupid. She said that she was prompted by those who had sent her, to say that the mind is like a watch, which, after a certain amount of wear and accumulated waste matter, needed to be cleansed and put again into an easy running order; and something like this it was which had now been done for us.

The same view of the case was subsequently given to us directly by the guiding intelligence of our band; who gave us to understand, that although the work was not yet fully completed, yet that what still remained could be accomplished without any material interruption of our regular work; and therefore two more *séances* were appointed for the present week.

A HEALTH INSTITUTION FOR BOYS.

"I am now to visit a remedial health-institution for boys. It is for those whose brains were in a disturbed, unbalanced condition at the time of their leaving the earth-life. Many of these are the victims of self-abuse, an evil which has in many cases been transmitted to them through hereditary law, from several generations of this kind of evil indulgence. It is an evil which to this class of humanity especially is hardly to be exceeded by any of the vicious courses of life.

"Here, in the spirit-life, the methods employed to restore the lost balance coming from such a wasting of the life-force are most wisely adapted to the end in view. The surroundings are so arranged that there is nothing to encourage the old tendency, and every thing to call into action the higher and more unused

Digitized by Google

portions of the brain. There are none of the opposite sex to be seen, nor any thing suggestive of them.

"I am now shown into a schoolroom in which are thirty of these boys, — averaging in age from six to fourteen years. The teacher is giving some lessons upon what seem to be much like the blackboards of our earthly schools. The pupils soon tire of these exercises, which seem to be of a mathematical character; and ask if they may not resume what they had been doing before.

"I watch them with renewed interest as they are now engaged at their favorite work. Each one soon has a supply of flowers on his desk, which he is eagerly weaving into different shapes of floral beauty. They even seem to have power to *create* these flowers, through a chemical combination known only in the spirit-life; and thus, in arranging their bouquets, the flowers can be *made* to fit into their places as the taste of the worker may dictate! My attention is directed to one little fellow who is especially skilled in this art. He is now giving the finishing touches to a white lily of exquisite purity and beauty. This boy is not of the class already named, but seems to have become the victim of an overgrown condition of the organs of combativeness and destructiveness, that is, according to the earthly methods of phrenological classification; but here they have a far more perfect system, but which cannot be clearly understood by those in the mortal life.

"As this boy is busily employed at his interesting work, so arranged to his taste that it tends to diver-

Digitized by Google

his mind and keep inactive the overgrown organs, — I perceive that occasionally something like a spasmodic throb of that portion of the brain takes place; and then starting up, he seems to look quickly back as if he would hit somebody. But soon he is drawn back again to his remedial employment; and thus in due time the morbid condition will pass wholly away, and a healthy and harmonious life be established.

"But the great aim of this institution is to afford a much-needed help to the unfortunate class first named; a class who are far more sadly disordered than any others to be seen here. The spirit-forms of this class appear to be wanting in some of the most vital qualities of a healthy condition. As I look at them, the comparison between theirs and a truly healthy organization most naturally suggested, is the difference between a green leaf in full vigor of growth, and such a leaf after it has been dipped in scalding water.

"On this class of subjects two forms of remedy are used; one the plan of diverting the brain-force to such employments as are best fitted for the purpose in view, and the other a positive method of restraint from the ruinous habit. In one case, which may be regarded as illustrative of the usual treatment pursued here, I see both these methods combined. In this case — a most sad and desperate one it seems to be — the positive restraint consists in the wearing upon the hands of the victim what have the appearance of being bright metallic flowers, so pointed and sharp as necessarily to deter from a renewed attempt at the old habit.

Digitized by Google

"My attention is now directed to another, a very peculiar and striking case of the malformation of a brain, there being a depression extending from one ear to the other, so deep that the subject almost seems to be possessed of two brains, one the back, and the other the front part of the head. Thus in the regions of ideality, sublimity, and veneration, there is almost a total extinction of vital action. With this subject, something like a regular mechanical apparatus is being used, so fitted as to press alternately, first heavily and then lightly, upon the misshapen parts. Through this process, aided by an electric force which goes with the action, a gradual re-action of the shrunken brain-tissue is induced, which will be a fair starting-point for the final recovery aimed at.

"These three methods, mechanical action, a positive artificial restraint, and an objective diversion of the faculties, constitute the main appliances of the remedial institution I have now surveyed."

In answer to a question, it was said that in all such cases of abnormal and unsound condition there is a natural law of the spirit-life, through which a recovery would *finally* take place; but that by special efforts thus made, the recovery was greatly hastened, and thus much good accomplished both for the individual and the general good.

A MYSTIC RIVER: ITS ORIGIN AND USES.

The vision of to-night was as follows:—

"I stand in the midst of grand and beautiful scene-

Digitized by Google

ry. In a central part of it is a healing fount or spring, which seems to have a special power to quicken the vision of those who use it. Also, when applied to weak spines, the water seems to have power to remove the weakness. I ask to have the water applied to me, that my vision may be quickened; but am told that *that* is not what I need, but only that by quiet surroundings the lenses of my vision, so to speak, may become steady and clear for use.

"I pass on farther; I see what appears to be an encampment of travelers, many of them resting in the cooling shades. But for me there is no rest here.

"I now come to a stream — a river it may be called. It is of a very unusual rapidity of current, and of great brilliancy of color. I can not make out exactly what is the composition of this current. It has a silvery look, and the motion is not only forward, but also in graceful curves and evolutions. At present I can see no especial use for this stream, but to add to the beauty of the scenery; and yet I feel that there *is* another use for it. I follow it up to the foot of a mountain where it *seems* to have its source, but find that it extends through and beyond the mountain. And now I perceive that from the summit of the mountain there is a shaft descending to the waters of the river beneath. Around the opening of this shaft, on the summit of the mountain, gathers a cloudlike mist; and this I find to be the real source of the river, also that this actual source of the river is caused by the will force of angelic wisdom. And this concentration of the higher will-force, assuming

Digitized by Google

first the form of a cloud-like mist, then descending through the shaft, and forming a gem-like stream, which being parted in the center, flows both ways from the mountain in a rapid cascade-like current through the landscape scenery on either side.

"I now take my stand by the side of the stream, and soon see another use than that of beauty for its waters. Dark-featured, Oriental-looking forms gather upon its banks, and plunge in with a homelike feeling; and on coming out on the other side, they seem to be greatly transformed in their expression. The effect is that of a religious rite to which they have been accustomed in their earthly experience. As they emerge they have an upturned and reverent look, and seem now to be fitted for a rapid progress in the onward and upward life. They have found out, that although it is only an emblematic stream through which they have passed, yet that through this they received a right preparation for a final embodiment of the thing signified in their own personal lives.

"All are now gone but one of stately, princely mien. He has a turban upon his head, and wears a robe of rich texture and various colors. He scorns to take the course of the common people, and is waiting to be received by some royal deputation, as has been his wont while upon the earth. He seems astonished and disappointed that no such reception is tendered him. He has waited long and in vain, and now seems almost utterly discouraged, and ready to throw himself backward into the ingulfing stream.

Digitized by Google

The soul-crushing discovery has at length dawned upon him, that, after all, he is but a man like the others, and that he, as well as they, must submit to the inevitable conditions of spiritual growth. He can hardly understand this. What! he, a prince of absolute rule, who has ever been accustomed to *control* conditions, must he now submit to the same humiliating test as the common crowd who had gone before him? He throws off his turban, strips himself of his gorgeous clothing, and throws himself prostrate with mingled indignation and despair. I pity him; for he does not seem to be particularly to blame for his mistaken ideas of his own natural superiority. It is what has been an inevitable part of his earthly position and growth. And it is indeed a bitter lesson he is now receiving.

"All this while, not far in the distance, have been the bright forms of compassionate spirits from the higher conditions, who have been, unconsciously to him, his active helpers in the severe struggle, sending rays of light into every accessible part of his brain. And not in vain have they done this; for now at length is the man so enlightened and humbled that he is ready — though still with a half-disguised shade of his native haughtiness — to begin, through humble and faithful effort, and to go forward in what must be to him the slow pathway of progress. For they who would be externally great upon earth must pay for it in the world of spirit-life; as it is a far harder task for such, than it is for the common people, to obey the inexorable laws of spiritual growth."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII.

A BOOK OF HUMAN LIVES. — THE THREE PILGRIMS.

"Oh the water! so pure and peaceful it looks! As it gurgles along in its course, it seems to speak of contentment and joy. And the modest and lovely flowers I see along its banks, and the leafy shrubs, and the tapering trees, with their spiral leaves pointing upwards as if in conscious gratitude to the Giver of all life, that of the tree and flower no less than that of the animal and of man, — himself the crown of all, — and all these leaflets and flowers, — how steady and earnestly they turn themselves to the light! Shall it be less so with man? shall he of all else seek the way of darkness rather than of light?

"Three weary travelers I now see, toiling on beneath burdens, — not of things of value, not of choice gems of truth and beauty, but of the dry sticks of a worn-out theology, which was fastened upon them by unprincipled and arbitrary priestly rule while they were yet in the earth-life. True men were these even in their darkened earthly condition, for they saw not the iniquity of the power that held them in a blind and slavish submission.

Digitized by Google

They worked faithfully and self-sacrificingly to carry out the designs of those, who, though ever ready to impose burdens upon others, would hardly lift a finger to do the work themselves.

"And now I see that one of these pilgrims begins to awaken to a sense of the folly of his course in thus continuing to bear his wearying and worthless burden when the higher and clearer light of the spirit-life is around him. He feels the inspiration of high and noble spirits not far from him; and, thus urged on, he throws off his slavish burden, and stands forth a free and happy man. The others, incited by his example, and by the inspiring power which they also feel, do likewise.

"And now the same active zeal which was once used to uphold the rule of a false and corrupt church is turned with all its force to overthrow the falsities that once oppressed these noble spirits. In their invisible forms, they re-enter the old confessionals, and whisper to the presiding priests of their iniquitous lives, and of the terrible penalties of their falsehoods and oppressions. They even penetrate to the head center of their former enslaving power, and make their searching whispers heard by him who sits upon the papal throne itself.

"It was a martyr's life these true men lived while upon the earth; and it is a martyr's crown they are now receiving in doing their noble work to undermine the false, and to upbuild the true, in the scenes of their former toils and sufferings."

In closing this evening's *séance* it was said, "I see

Digitized by Google

a large book before me, the first leaf of which we have now read. It is the book of human lives: other chapters from this book will be given in the further unfolding of our work."

THE LOVE-TYRANT AND HIS VICTIM.

This evening we had another leaf from the book of human lives, as follows:—

"I see before me, on a broad platform, a large, thick-set man, with a military cap upon his head, and a naked sword in his hand. Around his neck are intwined the delicate arms of a gentle woman, who seems to be entreating him not to go away to the war as he had threatened. But no impression appears to be made upon the man by her entreaties and tears. On the contrary, he seems to take a selfish delight in thus showing his power to wring her soul with anguish; and all because of her slavish love for him.

"She bears his selfish triumph for a while, and then stands back,—at first with bowed head and thoughtful brow; but now, with extended arm and significant gesture, she gives him to understand that his triumph has reached its limits, for that she is not entirely the weak and yielding thing he had supposed. She says to him, 'This has gone far enough. I will no longer submit to have my finer feelings so trampled upon and crushed. I have a power within me of which you have no conception,—a power that will now be fully manifested; for a voice has revealed to me that my love, as well as yours, has been a selfish one; for it has been because of my

Digitized by Google

fondness of being loved and petted, that I have thus far submitted to your selfish love whose great delight has been to play the tyrant-master. It is time that we both learn the lesson of true love more wisely. I am now called away: I elude your selfish grasp, pass wholly out of your reach, and leave you to yourself.'

"At this unexpected and astounding declaration, the man first turns slightly pale, but still continues to speak with self-confidence and even derision to his companion. But soon, seeing how earnest and real is the scene before him, he begins to tremble, and reaches forth with a vain endeavor to stay the departure of her whose value to him he begins now clearly to see. But she — passing upward in robes of pure white — seems to be wholly leaving him; and yet I can see that there is a bond still holding them together, though distantly for the present. As she is about to vanish from my vision, I see a look of unutterable sweetness and love turned toward him.

"I now return, and am, for the time, personally *en rapport* with the unfortunate man who has thus grieved, and driven from his visible presence, the only one who ever truly cared for him. I take his place, and seem to see with his vision, and take upon me his thoughts and feelings. 'Why, oh, why have I thus killed with my selfish tyranny, and driven away from me, her who was the light of my life? Oh! could I but call back her bright face, I would humbly kneel before her, and ask pardon of her and of her God.

Digitized by Google

"But now I am made to be conscious that it is the same *selfish* love that makes me feel and say this; and that I must learn to love her for her own sake, for her own well-being and happiness, even though mine should never come. But *can* I thus let her pass wholly out of my life? A reply comes to me, "Those who have once *belonged* to each other can never be wholly separated." But I am made to feel that it is for me, by kind and loving deeds to others, to grow up to her, and not for her to come back to my condition.'

"And thus we leave him in a fair way truly to find himself, and, in thus doing, to form a real union with his conjugal and soul counterpart."

A WAR-HELPER, AND HOW IT FARES WITH HIM IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

March 23, 1876. — I see before me a man, who, through all his earthly life, was engaged in the invention and manufacture of cannon. This was simply *his trade*. He never looked at the matter from a moral and humanitarian standpoint, but regarded it merely as an art to be perfected to the highest possible degree. When he coolly estimated how many men a favorite piece of ordnance would kill at a single discharge, he did not think of the suffering and loss of life, but regarded it simply as a triumph of his skill.

"And this was not especially from an intrinsic hard-heartedness of the man, but rather from an over-absorption in that which was to him the great work of his life.

Digitized by Google

"And now that his earthly life has come to its close, and he is fairly entered upon life as it is in the spirit-world, he appears to be utterly at a loss for something to do; the end of his growth having been seemingly reached in the perfecting of his special trade, of use only — and that a doubtful one as it now seems even to him — in the earth-sphere of his existence.

"His spiritual nature seems hardly to have taken the first step in its advancement; and now, as he is seen by me, standing upon the borders of the new life, and looking backward over his earthly career, the importance of his former calling seems gradually to dwindle into utter insignificance, whilst glimpses of grand realities begin to open to his spiritual perceptions.

"But a lesson awaits him, as the starting-point of that which is higher: a cannon-ball now *seems to strike him;* and he feels all the force and anguish of such a crushing-out of life. He begins now to see the *moral* import of the work he had been doing. He thinks this rather a severe introduction to that which he has now to learn; and that an appeal to his reason and conscience might have answered, without this terrible shock to his entire sensitive being. But there is no escape from a just and *natural* law of retribution in this realm of unswerving realities.

"The man is now at length thoroughly awakened to thought — not only in regard to the moral aspect of his former trade, but also in regard to the brutal custom of war to which it properly belonged; and

Digitized by Google

as his first great work in the spirit-world, he is to become active in overturning that same gigantic evil which while on earth he had helped to build up.

A GRAND VISION OF THE PEACE MOVEMENT.

"And now is opened to my view a great concourse of agencies, to display in its true proportions the magnitude of the great war-evil as it still exists upon the earth. Noble reformers are being raised up to show forth its enormity, and to aid in the removal of the giant wrong. One of these stands forth conspicuously to my vision as I look forward with prophetic eye to the future of this evil. The earthly career of this person has not yet commenced; indeed, he himself exists not as a fully individualized being, but only in the embryonic life. He is to be another Saviour to the world, in this one particular respect. His largely intuitive nature will make him ever open to the thoughts and purposes of similar noble reformers in the spirit-life, who, with him, will labor for the establishment of peace on earth, and good-will toward man.

"Now my vision is turned more directly to the spirit-side of the great peace-movement. Prominent before me is the stately form of one whom I now know to have been Gen. Winfield Scott when in the earthly life. But now, strange as it may seem, he is deeply interested in the peace-reform as it is being urged forward by mortal and spirit forces combined. Rather significantly, as I think, he appears to turn his back to the political and governing power of the

Digitized by Google

country, and to make his appeal directly to the military force, as it is scattered here and there throughout the land.

"I now watch him as he approaches one of these military posts, and throws his invisible will-power over the soldiers there stationed. Some of these seem to have an intuitive perception of the invisible presence of their chief, and stand up with a reverential bearing; others are lounging in attitudes of negligence and indolence.

"The efforts to impress these men, are not without success. Some of them are made to feel that there must be other, and more rational methods of settling national differences than through such brutal violences as they have been trained to; that wars are indeed, generally, the products of a few designing and unscrupulous political leaders; and are so shaped as to promote selfish and personal ends, rather than national and patriotic ones.

"And now I see this stately, patriotic chief in spirit-life, turning his face resolutely, *sternly* indeed, toward the nation's capital. He goes forward; then seems to pause and hesitate, as he thinks of the many personal friends whose happiness is involved. But the pause is for a moment only; he then regains his resolute sternness, and, with the exclamation, '*It must be done!*' presses onward in his course. I ask why it is that thus, seemingly alone, he goes forward to so great a work as appears to be before him; when, lo! to my extended vision, I see approaching from all quarters the revered patriots of the nation's

Digitized by Google

history. Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and many others of the renowned and venerated ones, are now gathering around that seemingly doomed city; and with the same serious and determined look. They enter with their silent tread even the secret chambers of the various departments of state, — not forgetting the president himself, — and whisper words of stern rebuke, at the gross and widely-extended corruptions within the spheres, and under the control of those who *should* be the nation's safeguards. Many are seen to tremble at these silent rebukes, and to utter vain regrets that they should have been led to courses so dishonorable, — the fruits of which are so unsatisfactory and bitter.

"The president himself does by no means wholly escape the searching spirit of self-accusation. It does not, however, clearly appear that he has directly and personally engaged in fraudulent practices; yet he does seem to have closed his official eye on the frauds of others."

Owing to unfavorable conditions, this vision was left incomplete; and we were told that it was the intention to have it resumed, when it would be considerably extended, whilst some of the obscurities of what is given above should be cleared up.

AN EARTHLY MONARCH IN SPIRIT-LIFE.

"I now see before me an earthly ruler, — a king, who has just entered the spirit-life. He has still around him all the pomp of an earthly monarch; is sitting upon a throne of crimson drapery richly

Digitized by Google

ornamented with gold and precious gems. But, although thus surrounded with the insignia of royalty, he is yet sitting entirely alone, and in great surprise that none of his former subjects — some of whom he sees in the distance — approach to do him reverence.

"All these surroundings, I am given to understand, are temporarily bestowed upon him, that he may still retain a vivid consciousness of what he was in the life he has just left, and thus the way be prepared for the coming lesson.

"And now there approaches and stands before him one whom I should call a Christ-man, who speaks to him words like these: 'We have no inherited royalty here; you are but a man like the others. The only royalty we recognize is the royalty of real merit, — of noble thoughts, purposes, and acts. What have *you* done to entitle you to this? What have you, in your position of pre-eminent opportunities, done for the spiritual and temporal well-being of those who were under you?'

"Having said this, the Christ-man turns away, and leaves the now culprit-monarch to his own self-condemning thoughts. He tries for a while to evade the force of the thoughts thus aroused within him. He says, that, as to the spiritual welfare of his subjects, *that* belonged to the Pope and his priesthood, and, as to their material well-being, that belonged to those who stood between him and them. But for what, then, was he so lifted up above the others? Was it indeed that he might be the great spendthrift

Digitized by Google

of the nation, living most luxuriously and selfishly upon that for which others had toiled and suffered, — often in the poverty of absolute want? So it begins to seem to him, and deep feelings of remorse now torture his spirit.

"And, to aid him still further in this searching self-investigation, he is permitted to get a glimpse of the truly great of the spirit-kingdom. He recognizes some of these, and remembers them as having been only of the common people, upon whom, in his earthly rule, he had looked down as hardly worthy of his most distant thought. But now he sees that they have a power and a nobility which belong not to him. High in the spirit-life are they now, and wise instructors, around whom are gathered the spiritually hungry, with upturned and gladdened faces at the light and joy they are thus receiving. But *he*, the monarch, — now in mockery, as it were, of his true position, — toward him, no one turns a look of respect even, much less of reverence.

"And now I see all the gilded mockery that has been around him, crumbling rapidly away. The very foundations upon which all seemed to rest are gone; and he is fast sinking toward his true position in the life of the spirit, until at length I see him standing in the plainest, most frugal garb, — much like that of a wood-chopper of the lower class; and, although his form is still large and commanding, he has now — since all his external factitious helps are removed — hardly the strength of a child; and he seems desolate indeed.

Digitized by Google

"I now seem to take his place, and to speak his thoughts: 'What am I, then, as a reality, when all the externals, the superficialities of my earth-life, are no longer with me? I am nothing but a child, and need every thing in the way of true knowledge and growth. I must begin at the very foundation of life as it should be; and with divinely given help I will now so build, that the superstructure shall be enduring, as well as noble and grand. I will forget that I am a fallen monarch, and only be a rising man. I am willing — now that I see so clearly my mistake — to go to the very foot of the ladder, and, by even the most menial labors, gain the first step; and then will I patiently mount upward, — slowly and painfully it may be, — until I shall be truly noble and kinglike in my spiritual self-hood.'

THE HERMIT FANATIC.

"A man is now before me who has just entered the spirit-life, and whose earthly existence had been earnestly devoted to mistaken efforts to please his God and to secure for himself the highest seat in the heavenly kingdom. For this purpose he had turned wholly away from the world of active life, and devoted himself to the austerities of a hermit's life. His time was almost wholly spent in self-scourgings; and many times a day would he prostrate himself with his face in the dust of the earth, hoping thus to prove his humility and zealous devotion to his God. So austere and self-denying was his life, that his death was more that of starvation, than from any other cause.

Digitized by Google

"And now as I see him in that life to come, to which he had looked forward with such zealous but mistaken devotion, he seems still to be lying upon the ground in his old attitude of self-humiliation, and in the constant expectation of his call to go up higher, and take his place at the right hand of the throne. But the call comes not, and he seems about to despair of his hope. For now, stirred by the efforts of kind helpers not far from him, reflection is active within him. He considers again the divine promises, and, when he tries to harmonize these with his past life, his great mistake becomes apparent; for what did *he* do to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, and to care generally for those whom Christ came to seek and to save?

"Now the light strikes him still more clearly; and as he looks back with the quickened vision being given him, he sees that, after all, his supposed self-sacrifice and holy zeal were for a selfish end, even to secure for himself a higher seat and a brighter crown than others. But there he now lies in his self-assumed righteous humility, a useless member of the spirit kingdom; whilst all around, within reach of his vision, are crowds of happy ones all active in promoting the happiness and welfare of each other. But as for himself, he is but a useless encumbrance in this world of joyous activity.

"Another bright ray of light strikes him from the higher conditions, and he begins to see that it is only in *action* that he can find relief and happiness. He starts up from his prostration, and looks around for

Digitized by Google

something which he can do. A little child, hardly able to move of its own strength, is passing near him. He catches it up in his arms, and as he bears it along he seems to gather to his heart in some degree the strength and joy which he sees around him. But now the child escapes from his arms, and goes to its father, just seen in the distance; and the man is once more left with nothing to employ his newly-awakened energy.

"In looking earnestly around, however, he gains information of a location where are to be found those of an imperfectly formed spirit organism, and standing in need of just such aid as it is in his power to give. He is interested at once; but at first the thought comes to him, that it may be needful for him to go through some especial preparation before he enters upon his work. And being in doubt upon this point, he looks upward for guidance, when a noble-looking being approaches him and says, 'Follow me, and I will teach you what to do.'

"So now, under this wise guidance, he goes earnestly to work helping the unfortunate ones; and thus his preparation is made in the very midst of his labors.

"At this time he seems to have turned wholly away from the God of his former life, and is inclined to be independent of all such ideas; the person of his noble guide being, as he thinks, all that he needs to look up to. Yet now at length is he conscious of a stirring within which tells him plainly that the idea of a God — a true one now in place of his former

Digitized by Google

false one — is an essential part of his life, and that without it he can not grow up to the full stature of his spiritual manhood."

Here the sustaining power of the seer seemed suddenly to fail, and she could follow the vision no farther.

UNSATISFACTORY RESULTS.

For about two weeks past our *séances* have been either partially or wholly failures, owing mainly to the exhausted condition of our seer. The *attempt* all along has evidently been to present further instructions from our Book of Human Lives; and enough has been given in the way of brief glimpses, to show, that, had the conditions all been right, we should have had additional visions, equal to if not surpassing any we have previously had. Indeed, there seems to be an inexhaustible store of these grand and deeply significant illustrations of human life and its results as experienced in the spirit-world; the great difficulty being to establish and maintain suitable channels through which to convey them to those still in the mortal form.

At our *séance* of this evening, it was finally decided that our efforts should cease for the present, and the seer go into the country for rest and recuperation. Meanwhile the direction to me was to preserve the material thus far received, in an unused state, until a return of more favorable conditions should permit of further valuable additions.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII.

SCENES OF BENEFICENCE. — HUMAN LIFE-GERMS, NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL.

AFTER a lapse of seven months, we have at length resumed our *séances* under what seem to be favorable auspices. During most of this time Mrs. Loucks has been with friends in the country, and has thus had a good opportunity to regain her lost vigor.

My present report is of the first *séance* after her return, given as nearly as possible in her own words.

"I feel awed into the deepest reverence by the greatness and wisdom that now seem to approach me. But I must try to stand firm in faith and trust, aiming ever to rightly receive and use all that shall be given me." She then uttered an earnest and appropriate prayer, and the vision opened as follows: —

"I seem to see myself ascending a steep hill until I come to a bench or narrow plain. Beyond this rises a still more difficult ascent. I pass over both of these, and then at the summit am received upon what appears to be a cloud, lighted up with a soft brilliancy, with which I am both lighted and warmed. On this I float away into the regions of spirit-life;

Digitized by Google

and here, through something like an archway, I behold an imperfectly formed home of a soul recently from the earthly life, whose condition may serve as the starting-point of the lesson now to be given. For I am to trace, with my illumined vision, the gradual unfolding of such a human life, even from its earliest embryonic existence.

"It is most wonderful, that which I now see: it is a mere electric spark, as it were; but although thus infinitesimally small, it is yet a beginning of *individualized* life. And hereafter, whatever may be its adverse changes, that human life-spark shall never be extinguished. I now watch this life-spark, this center of a human being, as, in accordance with its inherent law, it incessantly revolves amid its chemical surroundings, attracting ever to itself the essential elements of growth. The first processes result in a gradually enlarging circular form; then come signs of the various bodily organs: more and more distinct and largely defined are these, until at length the full-formed infant is there, whose living activity can no longer be confined to the narrow abode, but, aided by nature's throes, it escapes into the open area of human life.

"I am now to trace this individualized existence, thus introduced into the exterior world, until a more divine light reaches the very center, the germ within a germ, so to speak, and the *spiritual* embryo is quickened into that diviner life whose home is in the unfading Beyond.

"For there is in every human form the embryo of

Digitized by Google

a spiritual life, which by an inevitable law must *some time* be awakened and gradually unfolded into the higher phases of an immortal career. And it depends wholly upon the conditions, including hereditary tendencies, with which the individual is surrounded both before and after the natural birth, as to how soon this spiritual embryo shall be quickened by the divine rays of light and love, which are ever seeking to penetrate the external, and to reach the center of the life of the spirit.

"As I watch the course of the vision being given me, I perceive some instances in which this new life unfolds itself in exceeding loveliness in the season of early childhood. In other cases the event is in early youth or in the vigor of manhood; then again, when tottering age is just ready to fall away into what had before seemed a dreamy nonentity, even here *sometimes* the awakening of the inward life is seen, giving hope and cheer to the last of earth's scenes. But with earthly conditions as they now are, *the masses* pass on into the Beyond with the spiritual still in its embryonic state, to be there awakened through means wisely adapted to the end. But in *all* there is the same natural necessity for the spiritual as there is for the physical birth; only in the spiritual there is often great delay, owing to adverse conditions which press down and hinder the struggling efforts of the inward life.

"This distinction between the physical and spiritual births, I can clearly perceive to be a reality, although it is not now given me to enter into an

Digitized by Google

enlarged explanation. But at the first birth man is seen to enter into a life which is largely animal in its nature; whilst at the second, or spiritual, the moral powers and religious aspirations assume the ascendency, using the bodily or animal capacities simply as helps to the spiritual."

LIFE-CENTERS AND THE LAWS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

What is given under this heading may be regarded as mainly my own; that is, so far as *the expression* is concerned. The leading or "basic" thought, as it was called, was, however, given me by our presiding intelligence, with the request that I should elaborate it in my own language and style; but doubtless still under my special inspirational influence. The result follows.

It is now my work to unfold briefly the laws of spiritual growth as evolved from the individual life-centers. The action is imperative and universal in its sway. Even the darkest phases of human life are still subject to this absolute law of growth. There is in reality no such thing as a positive retrograde movement. The down grades of human life are apparent, not real; they are only because a valley — a dark and repulsive one, it may be — lies directly between the present standpoint and the far more attractive heights beyond.

To turn to the vegetable world for illustration: "that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die;" thus it often is in the life of the spirit. As, a

Digitized by Google

the very time the material seed lies covered by the earthly mold in dark and festering deadness, the process of real growth is still active, so in some of the most adverse conditions of human life. Often is it, that what seems darkest to the natural vision, in the inward nature of things is still a decided forward movement of the spirit's growth.

What now of external helps in this spiritual unfoldment? The reply is, that all such helps are preliminary rather than positive. Here, again, we turn to nature's illustrations: if a space of growing grass be covered with a flattened stone, the process is immediately checked, but not destroyed. The struggling tendency toward growth still goes on beneath. Or, if a delicate vine be shut up in a darkened cellar, it will still stretch forth its tendrils, in frail obedience to the laws of growth, toward the faintest ray of light that may reach its darkened abode. But now let some beneficent hand take off the oppressive stone, and remove the tender vine into the open air and sunlight; how then will the pale grass and the sickly vine regain once more their growing freshness!

It is much so with the unfortunates of earth. Adverse conditions shut away from them the moral light and warmth which should be theirs, and they pale and languish as to their higher, spiritual life. The special, if not indeed the *only* work of intermediate agencies, whether in or out of the material body, is to remove the obstructions which surround and overshadow individual souls, that the wronged and suffering ones may be restored to their rightful

Digitized by Google

heritage of a divinely-given, spiritual sunlight and warmth.

Let this, then, be our work. Let us but labor to break the bonds of mental slavery and oppressive abuse of all kinds, and so to scatter the overhanging clouds of ignorance and superstition, that the pure influx of light and love may come in, and the work is done; for the soul-germ, thus touched and warmed by the rays of the central Sun of the spiritual universe, will of itself spring forth into a new life of moral grandeur and ever-brightening beauty.

A FALLEN WOMAN REDEEMED.

After an earnest expression of devout feeling, — a short season of quiet following, during which her countenance lighted up with an expression of serene joy, — the seer said, —

"I seem to have passed over a long distance, through pleasant scenery, and attended by the consciousness of near and delightful influences. My conveyance appears to be an extemporized platform of aërial substance, borne along by unseen force. I am now at the point where I am expected to step off; but I hesitate to trust myself in the dim uncertainty before me. But I soon gain the needed faith; and, lo! I am at once wafted gently to the chosen point of my observation.

"Here I see, in a somewhat dark and misty atmosphere, a plain, unfinished, and uninviting building, having no pretensions whatever to architectural finish. It is the worn and shrunken *skeleton* form of

Digitized by Google

a woman, that I now perceive to be the sole occupant, resting in almost utter lifelessness upon what seems to be the bare ground, — there being not even the convenience of a floor to the comfortless structure. The spirit-body appears to be almost utterly drained of the magnetic forces which should now be its life and strength; whilst the human soul within has been reduced to a mere smoldering spark, as it were, of the divine life of humanity. There seems to be no inherent power of motion whatever.

"But all around, in loving nearness, are to be seen, in beneficent action, the magnetic forces of especially appointed helpers of the unfortunate one, gently fanning the slumbering spark into that new and glowing life of the spirit which is sure to be hers in the end. The spark revives: the spirit — originally of great fineness and beauty of fiber — begins once more to think and to feel. And, oh, with what loathing she now looks back to the life she once lived upon the earth! The thought of having prostituted her body almost unto the death of her soul, is now to her a most humbling and yet an arousing thought. Inspirations from invisible helpers add intensity and strength to that which is awakened within her; but as yet she sees not *all* the beautiful light, nor feels in its fullness the magnetic warmth thus thrown around her; for such a *full* consciousness would be too overpowering to her sensitive and now weakened powers. But the help thus invisibly and lovingly visited upon her frail condition soon arouses her to earnest aspiration and active effort.

Digitized by Google

"And now other helps come to her wasted, depleted condition, in a manner strange and wonderful indeed. Between her and the grossly sensual man who once preyed upon her vitality to pamper to his selfish lusts, I perceive a mysterious connection, — a magnetic chain, it seems to be, which, through an inexorable law, compels him to yield back to his victim the portion of life-essence which rightly belongs to her, but of which he had succeeded in robbing her for a season. And thus, as she gradually regains the missing elements of her spirit-form, his coarse organism is seen to shrink into almost hopeless imbecility.

"I gladly turn from this sight, to watch still further the progress of the newly-awakened one in the spirit-life. With her rapid increase in strength and beauty, comes the earnest desire for activity. She is asked which shall be her choice: to descend once more into a nearness to the earthly life, to help those she has left behind; or to go on still higher into the regions of light and beauty now so clearly before her. Her reply is, 'Oh, let me go back and speak a warning word to the darkened and suffering ones I have left behind!'

"But, by her wise and loving helpers, she is soon made to see that she is not yet in a sufficiently recovered and strengthened condition to allow of her return to such a work, in so close a proximity to that which had once proved to be too strong for her.

"Her present work is, therefore, one of waiting and preparation; and thus I leave her.

Digitized by Google

A FOUNTAIN OF LIQUID PEARLS.

"I now see what appears to be a fountain of liquid pearls. All the colors of the rainbow disport themselves amid this spray of brilliants.

"But not for beauty alone is this gorgeous display; for every ray of light, as it sparkles in its kaleidoscope changes of soft brilliancy, has within it a richness not only of beauty, but also of health.

"Around and beneath the spray of this wonderful fountain, are to be seen the lovely forms of children. They are of a class who had failed to receive the natural nourishment and growth which should have been theirs in the earthly life. To them this fountain seems to furnish all the elements necessary to the recovery of what they were thus deprived of in their brief preliminary existence.

"It is a beautiful sight I now see, as I watch these little ones gayly disporting themselves beneath the ever-shifting brilliancy. And ever and anon, as they open their cherub mouths, they take to themselves this natural and perfect nourishment as prepared by the wisdom of the spirit-life.

"I am now permitted to analyze these pearly drops of liquid life. They have within them an epitome, as it were, of all the natural and healthy experiences of the earthly life. And thus the effect, in some instances, upon these infant ones, — momentary and flashing though it be, — is like that of the most ecstatic of human experiences while in the earth-sphere.

Digitized by Google

"And so it is that these defrauded ones as to their earthly existence may both grow in their spirit-forms, and also recover somewhat of the lost experiences of the earthly life, without which the higher growth in the spirit-spheres must be greatly retarded.

A RELIGIOUS FANATIC: HOW TREATED.

"Again I come," said the seer, "to seek for instruction from your bright spheres of truth and love. The gentle and gracious sister with golden hair and sweet, smiling face, to whom I make my salutation, waves me a welcome; and I soon find myself in near proximity to a group of brother and sister spirits, who seem to have met for some important work of benefaction. In the center of the group is the special object of their interest. It is one who, while on earth, was a zealous fanatic, under the control of a religion of darkness and superstition. All her life long had she, with honest purpose, practiced the severest self-inflicted austerities, with the firm faith that in this way only could she gain admittance to the heavenly kingdom, and receive the commendation of the Master. Her great ambition had been to be a partaker of his death as well as of his life. So, with a crown of piercing thorns upon her head, and with bare and bleeding feet, she ever lived amid pains and privations, until at last a self-invited death introduced her into the new life-sphere of which her conceptions, while on earth, had been of the most imperfect and perverted character.

Digitized by Google

"And now in her spirit-form she lies there in the midst of the group of beneficent ones who have come especially for her relief. The sadly misguided one, how much is she to be pitied! Her eyes are uprolled, her hands clasped with a convulsive grasp, and her whole being thrilled with a self-chosen agony, which she still determinedly clings to as her only anchor of safety; for she still thinks that self-inflicted torture is the only passport to the higher seats of the heavenly kingdom, and that Jesus the Saviour will soon come to her release, and receive her to himself as a good and faithful servant.

"The group of helpers around her are taking loving counsel as to how they can best reach the misguided one, and deliver her from her sad bondage. They see clearly that the first step must be to free her from her abject self-abasement, and that she be made to feel and act for herself. Magnetic passes are made over her, to move away from the brain the terrible pressure which her long-continued, self-inflicted agony has left upon it. The effort is successful; but the first effects of this diffusion of the vital forces are to leave her in great weakness, and for a time she lies in almost utter imbecility.

"At length she is made to hear a voice speaking to her: she thinks it is the expected Saviour, and looks eagerly up with the hope of seeing him. But, instead of *one*, she sees many kindly ones around her, who, could she but understand things rightly, are all saviors to her in her present bewildered and unhappy condition.

Digitized by Google

"But now, at length, the voice speaks of her mistaken views, and of the sad results they have brought to her. At this she begins to be alarmed lest she should be amid the emissaries of heresy and evil, instead of the true saints of the Church.

"A dear sister of her earthly life is one of the surrounding group. With earnest and loving words, this gentle sister remonstrates with the erring one, asking her how it is possible that she can think that one who had drawn her life-nourishment from the same maternal breast, and who together with her had frolicked amid childhood's scenes of innocence and joy, could now join in a scheme of deception and fatal error. This appeal gains at length a kindly reception in the disordered mind; and the way is thus prepared for a still further advancement of the work in hand.

"And now, to complete the work, comes one who, in mercy to her still weak and wavering condition, and to the end that her preconceived ideas may not be too rudely shocked, and thus the anticipated good be defeated, appears at first as a *winged* angelic messenger from the Saviour she has been expecting. This angelic being, whose presence commands her reverential attention, now reasons with her, gently removing the most deeply seated errors of her past life; points out the true way to gain the higher conditions, and tells her that all the kind ones around her should be regarded as her instructors and helpers in the onward pathway of wisdom and love now before her.

"Having thus gained her attention, and given the

Digitized by Google

misguided one her first lessons in the new life, *the wings* are laid aside, and the one who had worn them says to her, 'I also am but a brother and a common co-worker in this field of action, and you are my sister; and all these around you are your brothers and sisters who have come to help you out of your unhappy condition into a life of freedom and joy with us.'

"The recent comer from the earth seems now to be somewhat aroused and strengthened, and her mental perception to be partially opened to the new truths. But she still shrinks from a *full* confidence in those around her. At length she arises from her prostrate position, and wanders away by herself, amid the regions of wonder in which she now finds herself. But so many strange things and beautiful things attract her attention, that she soon becomes convinced that this must indeed be the heavenly land; and that, in order to its right exploration, a wise teacher must be had. For, on her right hand, there opens to her view a perfect maze of beauty, of which the name of flowery land gives but a very faint conception; and now, on her left, appears a joyous procession of youthful spirits, all crowned with wreaths of flowers and sparkling gems of beauty, wending their way earthward to welcome the coming of a new child-spirit into the land of the happy. She finally resolves to return to the group she has left, and with friendly confidence accepts of their guidance and aid.

"And now that the special work of the group is

Digitized by Google

accomplished, it seems to float away from my vision, appearing in the distance like a graceful pyramid of soft, rainbow-hued lights, to which nothing within our earthly knowledge can so justly be compared as the form of a chandelier of great magnificence and beauty."

A TEMPLE OF AMBITION, AND ITS OVERTHROW.

"As I approach the scene of my observation, I behold a massive temple constructed somewhat after the usual style of buildings of state. It stands in a commanding position, surrounded by green lawns. But the gradual rise toward the building is seemingly by stone terraces; and this, together with the general features of the building itself, gives to it a cold and forbidding aspect. It is a monumental temple, erected and dedicated to themselves by self-elected nobles and aristocrats of a republican land. In their earthly lives, these had given themselves almost wholly to schemes of a selfish ambition; sacrificing to these all the finer sensibilities of social and domestic life. Love, friendship, parentage, and all such relations, were to them as nothing, — only fit, in their estimation, for those of mediocre capacities and inferior lives. Leaders in political life, devotees of science, and even teachers of religion, are to be found among these. Hard, unnatural, one-sided lives were theirs in their preliminary existence; and now here in this higher but sternly retributive life, have they been permitted to carry out to its natural results the end for which they have been striving. Hence they

Digitized by Google

have builded this massive monument to their own greatness; which, as they have fondly flattered themselves, would not only be an enduring tribute to their fame, but also a home of dignified rest and peace.

"In accordance with these ends, the entire inside of the building is arranged with special reference to personal grandeur and repose. There are innumerable niches, in each of which there is a statue, not of some magnate of general recognition, but of their own personal selves. Instead of inclosed apartments for retirement and quiet repose, here are open alcoves appropriated to individual use, in which are to be seen all the appliances for an ostentatious display of personal dignity and luxurious repose. For what else was there now left to them? was not their work done? and *ought* they not now to stand upon their well-earned dignity as permanent models of human greatness?

"But why is this? Why comes not the expected peace and dignified joy? They have none but *themselves* for whom to live; and even among their own class they can not experience the helps of a true social life, for each one is so lifted up in his own estimation that he can not condescend to mingle his life experiences with those of others. And so all soon becomes a blank and dreary selfishness, *in itself* a hell of no inferior magnitude and intensity. What a mistake! each one sitting upon the cold apex of his own assumed greatness, with no higher end or further work before him; home and social life, with all their soothing and softening ministries, all far beneath

Digitized by Google

him. His is a masculine kingdom, with no gentle woman-soul to share it with him, or child-love to soften its sternness.

"The mistake thus made is one which only the wise methods of discipline, as found in the spirit life, can rightly correct; and hence it was that these self wise and great ones were thus permitted to work out to its legitimate end the kind of life which has been theirs. The salutary result is even now beginning to be seen. The slighted and wronged departments of their being urgently demand redress; and soon they begin to look longingly from the isolation of their cold and lofty temple down upon the gentle slopes; the gracefully winding walks fringed with sweet and modest flowers, to be seen in their near surroundings. Here are the different orders of social life in all their attractive variety,—the loves of the youth and the maiden, the joys of parentage, with other delights of a happy home life.

"And now the mistaken ones are to be seen gradually descending from their uplifted position. First one, then another, makes excursions among the happy groups below; and, the taste of a truer life being thus given them, they finally resolve to leave their massive temple, and mingle their lives with the lowly and the happy.

"But what shall be done with their magnificent temple? The question is discussed among them; and it is finally resolved that it be given up as a future home for that childhood of which heretofore they had thought so little and so meanly. The change is

Digitized by Google

made; and behold, now with the entrance of thronging childhood, with all its accompaniments of innocence, of playfulness and love, that cold gray building becomes transformed into a building of light and beauty.

"And where now are its former inmates? Their self-assumed greatness is gone with that which had symbolized it; and little, indeed, was there in them of that spiritual manhood which alone is recognized as great by the light of the higher spirit life. *They* must become as children before they can rise into true greatness. Hence they are now seen to lapse away into a dark obscurity, from which they must work their way painfully upward into a true fitness, before the home of the happy can be theirs.

A GALA-DAY FOR CHILDREN.

"What I now see before me is a succession of stairways, reaching upward in the direction I am expected to go. I seem a little heavy and disinclined to make the effort, but finally go forward, and I am soon on a broad platform at the top. From this I am wafted quickly to the point of observation I am to occupy.

"A gala-day for children, I think it is that I now see. They are mostly of those who were early taken from the earthly life, and hence they missed much of its severer discipline, and also much of the spiritual growth which might have come of this discipline; and thus the gain and the loss serve to counterbalance each other. They are all girls, and are grouped

Digitized by Google

together in a most graceful manner, dressed in their gala robes, made of the finest and most beautiful fabric. All is lively and joyful with them: a sight it is indeed of great purity and loveliness.

"How beautifully and gracefully do these little ones float around in their gossamer robes of softly blending colors! Flowers of every shade of beauty are showered upon them. And these flowers, for the time at least, appear to be possessed of intelligent life; for they do not seem to fall with a dead weight, but with a bee-like motion they glide from one to another of the fleecy draperies of the young girls, as they are gayly moving through the joyous dance.

"Now my attention is especially drawn toward one who appears to be very different from all the others. Her dress is of a bright red; her hair of a jet black, as also are her eyes, at least *apparently*, but there is such an unnatural sparkle to them, that they gleam almost like coals of fire. She gazes around at first with a wild and startled look, feeling evidently uncomfortably out of place in her present surroundings. But soon she begins to recover her self-possession, and to show an interest in the graceful movements of the gentle and happy ones around her. And now she tries the quick and wiry motion to which *she* had been accustomed in the dance. The contrast presented is unsatisfactory to her; and she is anxious to study and imitate the graces of the others. Seeing this wish, some of these approach, and, with extended hands, invite her to mingle with them in the dance.

Digitized by Google

"At length she is fairly drawn into their circles; and very soon a marked change is seen to take place with this one who had at first seemed almost like a sprite of the wildwoods. The gentle, magnetic touch of her more refined sisters penetrates her being, and soon the unnatural wildness begins to disappear. Even the color of her hair and eyes becomes changed; and she, from being a gypsy-like brunette, becomes a blonde with blue eyes and gentle look like the others.

"It now appears that the change thus wrought was a special purpose of this gathering, and that it was not a holiday merely, as at first it seemed to my vision; also that the groups of children, in their beneficent work upon their more unfortunate sister, have all the while been acting under the immediate prompting of wise teachers, who were at first so far in the background that I did not perceive them. But they are now nearer at hand, watching still more closely what seems to be the most critical part of the process.

"For, when thus deprived of her wild and somewhat rude energy, the especial subject of their labors was left in a very exhausted condition; and it is only by a wise concentration of the magnetic life of the groups of the other children, that the changed and renewed life becomes sufficient to give the needed strength and activity to the renovated one.

"My attention is now attracted toward a matronly looking person, who all the while has been watching,

Digitized by Google

with especial interest, the process thus successfully accomplished. She now makes herself known as the guardian and nurse of the transformed child. She calls the child to her, and tells her that she is now once more her real self; for that the life she had been leading, and the dark hair and features, and the bright colors in which she had been so long and steadily arrayed that she could remember no other, — were but unnatural, artificial results induced by the cunning skill of the gypsy band who had stolen her away from her home in Scotland when she was very young, and where her mother was still living in the body-form; who, could she but see the young girl as she now is, would be able to recognize her as the long-lost daughter of the family. Now the child becomes very anxious to see her *real* mother; but is told that the time for this had not yet fully come, but that all would soon come right, and her mother be with her in this her new and happy home."

It would seem from the above, that even external conditions existing at the time of death often follow into the spirit-life, and remain with the individual until conditions there are made so to change, that such hallucinations — for doubtless the cases partake largely of this character — shall have had opportunity to pass away. So this young girl was for a time a gypsy *to herself*, and partially so to others, until restored to her natural condition, — in this instance through special effort.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX.

LIGHTS AND SHADES OF THE SPIRIT-LIFE. — LOW FORMS OF SAVAGE LIFE.

"I HAVE had such hard work to get here!" said the seer. "I have had to climb over rocks, and push myself through rugged passes, until I had almost despaired of the success of my efforts. And, now that I am here, I find that it is but a barren region I am in. Only a few blades of grass find their way up through the crevices; but these seem to wave me on, and the feeling is given me that I have a lesson to gain even here.

"A few inhabitants only are to be met with, and they are of the wildest kind of the native American Indians. So wild and savage are they, that they seem to have hardly a wish for a higher kind of life.

"Some game is to be found here, of the wildest kind, but barely enough to supply the absolute necessities of savage life, even in the very low form here presented. The atmosphere is dark and oppressive: I can hardly endure its weight upon my spirit.

"The lesson here given is to illustrate the manner in which such extreme conditions of degradation are met and ameliorated by the wisdom of the spirit-

Digitized by Google

world and its agencies. The surroundings amid which these ignorant and torpid ones are placed are of a character so bleak and forbidding, that even within these forms of human life, — approaching as they do very nearly to absolute brute-life, — a feeling of dissatisfaction with the present is aroused; and this serves as a necessary starting-point of progress. For, without some measure of dissatisfaction with the present, no struggle for improvement is possible, — a condition not easily induced in such low forms of life as these.

GROUPS OF THE GROSSLY SENSUAL.

"Having thus gained the lesson of this locality, I pass onward still through a very unpromising region, until I come upon a neighborhood made up of persons of an extremely indolent and sensual character. Their attention and conversation are almost wholly occupied with what they still regard as the good things of life; and which even now they *seem* to have in nearly the same gross form as existed with them in their earthly conditions. Hardly a wish for a better kind of life is to be found among them, although they are now in a state in which their grossly sensual living can be with them but briefly, and that more as a semblance than a reality.

"My attention is especially directed to one who may serve as an illustration of the condition of the others. He is a large, full-bellied specimen of the olden-time landlord of a village inn, — one who was wont to supply liberally, not only his customers, but

Digitized by Google

also himself, from the abundance at his command. And now here, within the borders of the spirit-world, he seems to wish for no higher enjoyment than that of eating and drinking, and other kinds of a sensual life. He has a family around him, who seem to be upon nearly the same plane with himself.

"A thought seems now to strike him: he would like to visit again his old haunts upon the earth, where are still to be found many of his former boon companions, and where intoxicating drinks are always in free circulation, and where by a certain sympathetic process he is able — invisibly to his earthly comrades — to enjoy his share of their drunken revels.

"He prepares to go. The remonstrances of his home-companion have no effect upon him; and she seems to withdraw from him in terror at the thought of his return in a condition with which she has ever been but too familiar.

"Now an unseen influence seems to lay hold of this feeling of repellant dislike in the woman, at the thought of the drunken revelry that is likely to ensue, and to urge her to leave her present degraded position, and to rise to a higher plane of life from which she may be able to lift her companion out of the lowest form of his present degradation. Her consent and her aspiration are seen and accepted by the kind helpers who are near her; and now, with her children, she seems to be lifted up, and to be borne away in the distance.

"At length the husband is seen, in a drunken and

Digitized by Google

maudlin condition, returning to the place where he had left his family; but all is vacant and silent to his bewildered condition; and, wonderful to behold! as he enters the former home, the floor and even the foundations appear to sink away into a deep pit, carrying the drunken man with them! He finds himself a complete prisoner. He can not even so much as look out, excepting in an upward direction. He is amazed into soberness, and soon becomes in a sick and suffering condition. Gradually he loses somewhat of his grossness of form, and finally he begins to think seriously of his real condition.

"Three kindly, beneficent-looking spirits now approach, and try to impress him with better thoughts and purposes. But for a while they do not seem to meet with much success, for his mind still clings to material and sensual thoughts. Hence, when they ask if he would not like to rise into a higher condition of life, he replies that he *would* like to be out of his present condition, so that he could be free to go about and see more of the new and strange world in which he now finds himself. But as yet the kind spirit-helpers do not succeed in touching his moral nature, and causing in him a desire to rise in his spiritual life.

"But now I see these spirit-helpers unfolding before the man a chart of his earthly career, on which is marked out in startlingly clear outlines the sad results of his agency in spreading abroad, among former friends and neighbors, the terrible scourge of intemperance. Now at length he *is* aroused, and

Digitized by Google

stirred to the depths of his better being, as the startling revelation is thus made to come home to him in all its force. Most deeply and painfully is he moved; for at heart he was not a bad or unfeeling man, but the evil he had thus done while in the body was much the result of a thoughtless compliance with existing customs of the time and place in which he had lived.

"But astonishment and remorse have now seized hold upon him; and he asks of his kindly helpers and instructors, in what way he can best make amends for the vast evil he has wrought in his earthly life. They tell him that in one way only can this be done: he must, after being rightly strengthened and prepared for the work, go back to his old earthly haunts, and so use his invisible power that the terrible evil may be checked in its course, and that he may thus *save* as many as, through his agency, had been lost in the sad evils of a drunkard's life.

"And this, I am told, is the universal retributive method of the spirit-life. Those who have left the dark tracery of evil results in their earthly career must first make themselves active in wiping out these evil results. Until this is done, the higher steps of a progressive life can not be taken.

"The work of the poor man before me is to him so vast that he knows not how to begin it. He begs, therefore, of his instructors and guides, that they may close up some of the open doors before him, that thus, seeing but one way open at a time, he may be

Digitized by Google

able to work more steadily and successfully in what is immediately before him. He is now in a fair way of self-recovery, and thus I leave him.

"Turning my attention back to the same indolent and sensual group, I now perceive others making their way back to their old earthly haunts, to join again in drunken revels. I follow them with my vision, that I may better understand *how* it is that they, in their spirit-form, are able to become partakers of earthly intoxication. It is not exactly as I had supposed; for I now see that *this* class do actually partake of the finer and more powerful fumes of the liquors imbibed by their earthly comrades. Yes, it is even so: invisible lips follow closely the motions of the others; and thus it is that the intoxicating fumes are made to reach even into the borders of the spirit-life! But it is not *always*, I am told, that the result follows in this very material-looking way. In other cases, wherein the subjects are a little farther removed from the material conditions of earth, a similar result is reached by simply coming *en rapport* with dissipated ones still in the body."

By what we thus received, it was made to appear that the sale and use of intoxicating drinks extend their demoralizing and ruinous results directly into the spirit-world, as well as throughout the regions of earthly existence; and this not only because, in this way, drunkards are constantly being sent there by us, but also because the fallen ones already there are thus often kept in slavery to the old evil which was their earthly ruin.

Digitized by Google

Much earnest zeal was manifested in this direction by the controlling intelligence; and, in closing, we were told that a renewed and powerful effort would soon be made from the higher life to put a stop to these evils.

THE HOLIDAY SEASON: HOW IT AFFECTS HOMES IN THE SPIRIT-WORLD.

Dec. 26, 1876. — "The clouds part; a way is opening. . . . I now find myself at the summit of an elevation in the spirit-world. Before me is a deep chasm, spanned by an arch over which I am to pass. Now I am on the other side, and begin to ascend a slope. Just before me is a spirit sister who acts as my guide. At length we are upon another summit; and so lofty and unstable does it seem to me, that I tremble with apprehension. The sister clasps both my hands to re-assure me, and tells me that what now supports us is, to the forms which we now wear, as real and firm as are the mountains of earth. I am soon able to feel that this is so, and turn my attention to the special object of my visit.

"It is a large gathering, or settlement, of harmonious friends, the form of which is that of an amphitheater. At the present time there seems to be a special subject of interest among this people: it is the knowledge that now is the holiday season upon earth, when families are wont to assemble at the old homes; and the special interest of those before me is to know whether they will be remembered at these family re-unions. A yearning desire sent forth from

Digitized by Google

their friends upon earth is sure to reach them: so they now wait with eager hope and expectation; and, when such a strong desire does come up to any of these waiting spirit friends, a thrill of joy goes through the sympathetic circle.

"They have also on one side of the amphitheater, what to them answers the purpose of a telescope, through which they are able to search out the old homes, and catch glimpses of what may be going on in them. Toward this point of observation, there is a pressing forward from all parts of the amphitheater.

"The first whom I am called upon especially to observe is one in the deepest habiliments of grief, who has hardly strength to support herself as she comes forward to see if she can be permitted to look once more into the home she has recently left, whose inmates are also bowed down with the deepest grief. She is helped forward by a sympathizing friend, but whose sympathy is mingled with wonder at the extreme weakness and want of faith in the one he is helping. At length she succeeds in catching a glimpse of the darkened home: it is too much for her, and she sinks down in a swoon, or fainting-fit.

"Now comes another forward, — a beautiful and joyous young woman. She also succeeds in her effort. The old and happy home is open once more to her view, and she claps her hands with joy at the sight. Some one asks her if she would like to go back and stay there. 'Oh, no, no!' she replies, 'but I do so wish that the friends there could know how happy I am here! then I should be satisfied.'

Digitized by Google

"Others follow to improve this opening toward the earth-life. But it is only to view from a distance, or at best to get some direct intelligence from their friends, that the inhabitants of *this locality* look earth-ward. *These* do not seem to think of actually returning to be once more near to the loved ones of earth. They feel rather like friends on the opposite sides of an ocean, who only look for an occasional letter from the distant ones. So it appears that there are those in the spirit, as well as the earth-life, who have no faith in the possibility of returning into intimate communion with friends still in the earthly conditions.

"I now turn to a group on my left, who do not seem to belong to this locality, but have been impelled to visit here for some special purpose. They are of those, who, from certain unpropitious conditions, have lived, while on earth, without the unfolding of their affectional life; and hence, when they entered upon their present condition, they had no especially dear ones to welcome and cherish them. One of these is a woman, upon whose earthly experience, it is perceived, only one bright but transitory ray of the sunlight of love had been permitted to fall; and, although this was but a single flash of affectional joy upon her pathway, yet it is easy to see that this one experience has left a softening influence upon her spirit, which now gives it a striking and happy contrast to those who have had no experience whatever of the kind.

"But I am given to understand that the propor-

Digitized by Google

tion of these absolutely loveless ones is very small indeed, and that when compared even with the most unfortunate instances of the opposite class the loss is great indeed; as a concentrated love upon some individual is the natural if not necessary forerunner of a large and disinterested love of the many. And it now appears that it is to arouse the dormant affectional germ in these loveless ones, that they are thus brought into close relations with the happy home-life which generally prevails in this locality. The good effect is already visible, as some are even now seeking to attach themselves to an object of a personal love, if it be only a child.

"Another group I see, also visitors for a special purpose to this locality. Fathers are they, for the most part, who have recently left earthly homes, the children of which they did not know how to rightly appreciate till now they are severed from them. Most anxious are they to avail themselves of the opportunity here afforded, to look once more into those homes. They are affected even unto tears; but the sorrow is not *all* for the present separation: it is also, and largely, from the clear sight which is now theirs, of the vitiated and diseased lives which they led upon earth; the penalty of which is being visited upon the children they have left behind. A work have they now to do, to help counteract the evils thus inflicted; and wise instruction is here being given them as to how the work is to be done.

"I now visit another part of these secluded home-groups in the spirit-world; and here I learn still

Digitized by Google

more clearly, that these groups are made up of those who have no disposition to roam from their present position, either to revisit the abodes of earth, or to ascend into the higher regions of the spirit-life. This is by no means the most promising condition to be in, as it affords but a poor promise of advancement toward the higher spiritual states. Hence one is found here acting as a missionary, whose special object it is to incite in the people a wish to know more of what is beyond the horizon of their present locality. For a permanently fixed condition — mentally or otherwise — is by no means in accordance with the wisdom of the higher spiritual spheres.

STILL LOWER PHASES OF SAVAGE LIFE.

"I find myself compelled once more to pass through that rough and barren region I visited but a short time ago. I go on until I come upon a class of savages still more degraded than those before described. These appear to be of the lowest order of human intelligences, of whom there seems to be but very little hope. It is sad indeed to see in the human form so much of the grosser animal life, and so little of mind.

"These savages are of some Indian race, but not of the American type. They have made no advance whatever in civilization, — not even to the extent of making weapons of any kind. They have been accustomed to live upon roots and nuts, and such specimens of reptile life as they were able to capture without the use of artificial means. The atmosphere

Digitized by Google

is so dark and chilly, that I suffer while I remain here, and am very anxious to get away.

"But first I am to learn that even here there is *some* movement toward a more advanced condition. It is but a small thing that I now witness; but it is, as it were, a divine prophecy of a higher life, even for these degraded ones. It is only this: One of them, impressed by the invisible help of an Indian spirit of a higher grade, is at work, trying to fashion for himself a rude arrow. And this small beginning, it is given me to see, is the opening, — the very starting-point of a progressive life.

"So it is seen that all, even the lowest, are here visited with some kind of helping influence, to lift them out of the unpropitious present, — slowly it may be, but surely, — into a better future in the spirit-life.

AN AFRICAN GROUP, AND THEIR ANGEL TEACHER.

"I now pass on into a somewhat more promising region, and here find a group of the native African race. These also are rude, but far more intelligent than the others. A large and muscular race are they; and their favorite employment is the trial of their strength and skill in personal encounters with rude but effective weapons. There are two now before me thus engaged; and, with their powerful blows, they seem to cleave each other almost entirely asunder. But, strange to behold, the wounds thus made seem to be immediately closed again! This they regard as rare sport, although there is evi-

Digitized by Google

dently a shock of pain accompanying the fierce blows. Yet as there is no killing, or permanent maiming, they can seemingly go on indefinitely with their rough sport.

"But now something else attracts their attention, and causes them to cease their encounters. A most beautiful angelic being from the higher conditions of spirit-life descends to do the work of humanizing these rough and degraded ones. It is a womanly form of exceeding purity and loveliness, that I now see; and her design seems to be to reach *directly* the germs of a finer humanity which are enshrined even in these undeveloped specimens of the race. An angelic missionary indeed is this lovely being. A soft ray of light envelops her; her robes are of the most delicate material; whilst her extended arms are rounded to the most perfect models of angelic gracefulness; and, withal, she is endowed with the unusual power of approaching *directly* and *nearly* those so very far beneath her in their actual life. Such a contrast between her and the ones she has come to visit! They are struck with wonder and admiration at the sight.

"At length one of them ventures to reach forth, and cautiously touch one of those beautiful arms; then another even clasps them, hesitatingly and lightly. The angelic one does not shrink from, but smiles upon, them; for she is herself the embodiment of love, and she remembers the work of love she has before her. The light of her smile has already touched the germ of a finer life in these rude Afri-

Digitized by Google

cans; and they are now ready to listen to her words of appeal and instruction. She speaks to them in her gentle and winning way, of the roughness of their mode of life; and asks them if they could not choose rather, something more refined and elevating.

"She now holds out to one of them a delicate rose, pointing out to him the exceeding fineness and beauty of its make; and asks if he would not like to grow more toward such a refinement of being, instead of remaining in the coarseness of their present life.

"To this all seem to reply that if they could only become more like her, and be able to do a similar beautiful work for others, they *should* like to change their mode of life. She tells them that they all have within them the germs of a similar life; and that, if they do but sincerely desire and labor to be fitted for such a work of beneficence and love, it will surely be theirs in the end.

"And now, in response to the newly-awakened desire for progress, she directs their attention to the natural action of the law of growth as it is in the spirit-life. First they are directed to look upward to a group, who, in the progressive life, are considerably above their own condition. As they thus look upward toward this group of farther advanced spirits, the desire is aroused within, to be themselves upon the same plane of a higher life; and, in response to the going forth of this desire, sympathizing helpers from the higher group come forth to meet and to

Digitized by Google

lift these of the lower condition up to the same level with themselves.

"And so, from one condition to another, — ever still farther onward, — their course is to be continued in the endless career of spiritual advancement."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X.

SYMBOLIC TEACHINGS. — ELECTRIC WATERS AND THEIR USES.

JAN. 22, 1877. — After considerable delay from causes which I will not stop to explain, we have this evening had another successful *séance*, substantially as follows: —

"I stand beside a clear and rapidly flowing stream. Around and passing and repassing through it are many spirit-forms, mostly still unsupplied with the usual clothing of this life. These seem to be in a feeble and but partially revived condition; and the passing through this stream, which I now perceive to be of an electric character, tends toward giving them the strength which they need. And, as this increased strength becomes theirs, the power to assume the natural spirit-clothing is manifested in each individual. And those who are thus even partially clothed are seen extending help to those in an unclothed and feebler condition.

"I think that these are of a class who, on leaving the earthly body, from a certain combination of conditions of rare occurrence, were without any especially prepared friends to meet them on the spirit

Digitized by Google

side; and are therefore taken to this *general* helping arrangement, it being of the nature of a public benefaction.

"And now at length, having received the benefit of the electric waters, they begin to ascend a slope on the other side, the feebler still leaning somewhat upon the stronger for support. I myself ascend with them; and, as we move along among the widely branching trees through which our pathway leads, I am conscious of a specially bracing influence, also electric I think, which comes from the trees, and is infused into the surrounding atmosphere.

"At length we arrive at the summit, where is a level space, with convenient places for rest. And now I am made conscious that all along there has been a band of wisely ordered helping spirits just above the company, who have been superintending both in the passing through the electric stream, and in ascending the slope. Four pairs are there of them, — eight in all; and their kindly and helping care it is cheering to behold.

"From the summit of the hill where we are resting, I see in the distance a vast ocean-like expanse of snow-white water. In this, struggling in the rolling waves, and almost sinking at times, is another class of spirits, who stand in need of a somewhat different treatment from the first described. These are in an extremely lymphatic and inactive condition; so much so, that they have scarcely any disposition to help themselves. Hence they need a compelling power in that direction; and are therefore thrown into these

Digitized by Google

deep and surging waters, where, *as it seems to themselves*, their very existence depends upon efforts of their own, and of a decidedly earnest, almost a desperate character.

"And yet, as to the reality of the case, it is not as it seems to them; for to my sight there is a clearly defined connecting link, with a sustaining power above, which renders their actual condition one of perfect safety. So it appears that this also is a wise and beneficent arrangement, specially fitted to arouse to a needed activity those in conditions of extreme and long-continued indolence and torpidity of life. For without some such *shock of necessity*, as it were, the very starting-point of an active and upward career would be wanting, and these souls would remain in a fixed condition of sluggish indolence, utterly fatal to a true and progressive life.

"The company are now leaving the resting-place on the hill; and, as they pass onward, to many of them there seems to be directly in their pathway something like an opening chasm, the earth-like substance upon which they move being to all appearance rapidly falling away from beneath them; and they are seen to waver with fear, the weaker clinging to the more stable ones for support. But, seeing that no actual evil result follows, they all gradually regain their confidence; and, as they do so, the ground upon which they were resting is restored to its former stable condition. This is a lesson of a subjective character, teaching the importance of an abiding trust in the powers above us.

Digitized by Google

THE ABODES OF JUSTICE AND OF LOVE VISITED.

"I now leave the others, and pass on by myself into a gracefully growing forest, the branches of which are so blended and interlocked that they form a perpetual succession of archways. Through one of these, at the end of which I discern an encouraging light, I am moving forward, a perpetual shower of the most rich and fragrant flowers falling upon and enveloping me at every step. And these flowers seem to be endowed with intelligent life; for they linger over and around me, with something wonderfully like conscious caresses.

"But this, though extremely pleasant and soothing, does not satisfy. It is true that I love flowers of all kinds, and more still those who thus seem to love me; but yet more ardently, as I trust, do I love the higher truth and wisdom, rich lessons of which I feel are now before me.

"With the prayerful wish thus uttered, I seem to glide rapidly on without the use of my limbs, or effort of any kind, until I reach the light at the end of the archway. Here I find a pagoda-like cottage, with roof and turrets pointing significantly upwards. In front is a pair of scales, intimating to my perceptions that this is the abode of justice. I desire earnestly to see the personification of justice, who, as I am thus impressed, is the occupant of this cottage. In response to my mental call, a noble-looking personage comes forth and salutes me. His appearance is that of one considerably past the meridian of

Digitized by Google

mortal life. His head is bald, and of a form indicating the especial rule of firmness and active energy; also of a love of home-life. The impression comes to me, that this must be the one known as Benjamin Rush in the earthly life."

Here followed a long conversational discourse with the seer, in which the representative of justice spoke with special earnestness of the necessity of vigorous, energetic, and even *forcible* action in the field of earthly reforms. Especially did he urge this effort of force in suppressing the ruinous traffic in intoxicating drinks.

But I am unable to give even an outline of this presentation of what, as subsequently appeared, was intended simply as the positive side of reform action. The complement of this was immediately given as follows: —

"I now pass on to the left, and soon come to a habitation of quite a different character, its roof being bower-like in form, whilst all its features are of a similarly well-rounded and harmonious shape. Roses and bright flowering vines of all kinds intertwine themselves throughout this lovely structure. It is the home of those who believe in the law of love as the all-prevailing power of reform.

"And yet it is admitted even here, that the law of force has an important place in human action of the kind. And hence this position is by no means to be regarded as one of opposition to the methods of the stern advocate of justice whose home I have just visited. The power of force and the persuasion

Digitized by Google

of love should both be used to reclaim the wayward But generally, in cases of the extremely hardened, these should come in the order of my visits to the two homes: the healing power of love should follow closely in the wake of the stern force of justice, to bind up, to heal and fully restore, that which the strong hand of power had at first laid hold upon with relentless grasp."

TWO SISTERS, AND THEIR BEAUTIFUL WORK.

A very pleasant expression is upon the face of the seer as she says, —

"I can not go away from here, it is so attractive and beautiful. Flowers there are innumerable, of every hue, and of the most delicate shades; and every leaf of the trees, and the foliage of the shrubs, is tinged with the hue of the softest and loveliest light. The atmosphere also is of a soft and balmy fragrance, grateful indeed to my senses.

"But at length I become reconciled to take only what naturally belongs to me, and to pass on to other scenes and to a higher work.

"Terraced steeps are now before me, — the same soft and lovely tints pervading all. I go forward and upward until at length I seem to step off upon a floating cloud, also of lovely tinted colors. To my feet these seem to be so firm, that I move over them with the same confidence that is with me when walking upon the earth.

"And now, just before me, I *see* for the first time — although I am made conscious that she has really

Digitized by Google

been with me all the while — a dear, womanly spirit, having by each hand a young child. She has, as it now appears, been on an earthly mission; and, in returning, has kindly taken me under her guidance. She glides on before me until we come to the borders of a fleecy cloud. Here a spirit-sister from the higher spheres comes to meet the returning one, who has, for a special purpose, been to visit the old earthly home. As she advances, a scroll is held up by her, intended especially for the sister; but I am permitted to read it. The words are, 'I have succeeded in planting a ray of light in our old and saddened home, that will be sure to light our aged father cheerfully through the darkness before him.' These words are *read* by me, but by the spirit-sister the sense is received by intuitive perception. The two sisters are moved to sympathetic tears; but every tear seems to have a smile of joy upon it.

"I now perceive that the one from the higher conditions is so constructed as to the organization of her spirit-body, that it is not possible for her to visit the earth directly and personally; but that the other is especially fitted for this kind of effort. And this difference is not so much from a superior spiritual elevation of the one over the other, as it is from an intrinsic difference in their spirit-organizations. The nature and cause of this difference I am now about to be shown more clearly; as I am to follow the more ethereal of these sisters to her home, that I may learn more of the peculiarities of the class to which she belongs.

Digitized by Google

"As I enter this group or sphere of the spirit-life, I am impressed at once with the prevalence of a very marked difference between its inhabitants and others of the same degree of maturity. Grown-up children indeed are these, to all appearance. They have all the purity, the simplicity, and innocence of early childhood, and yet with a growth of refinement and intelligence which belongs only to those of an advanced degree of progress. Their employments are of a peculiarly refined character, so much so that it is impossible for me fully to understand, still less to clearly describe them in our imperfect words. But the case is seemingly somewhat like this: they are weaving the fibres of high spiritual thought into shapes that can be sent downward toward the earth-sphere, receiving accretions by the way until they are fitted to be the especial aids of inspiration to mortals.

"It is now made to appear to me, that this class of spiritual beings consists of those who were not only of premature birth into the earth-life, but were also, in their pre-natal growth, of an organization peculiarly refined and promising. Their care and education thus far have been wholly in the spirit-world; but I am given to perceive they are yet to undergo a change that will fit them, in their turn, to visit the *earth* for a needed knowledge and experience before the full perfection of human growth, as it is seen in the higher unfoldings of the spirit-life, can be attained by them.

Digitized by Google

EXTREME EXALTATION.

"Onward, still farther onward, I now go, until far beyond the home of these innocent ones; higher and still higher I am rising, until I find myself in a region entirely beyond any I have hitherto visited. It is a condition so elevated and rarefied, that I am unable to keep my balance. I can not remain here: I must return to the atmosphere of earth; and yet I am impressed, that, as a first experiment, my visit has been a successful one; and that I shall yet be able to become sufficiently at home in this exaltation, to gain somewhat of its higher truths for the advancement of our work."

A PERSONAL MESSAGE OF WISE IMPORT.

The following message came to me soon after the close of the above vision. I insert it here, notwithstanding its personal character, under the impression that it may be of use to others, as it certainly has been to me. It should be premised, however, that the immediate cause of its being given to me was, that for some time previous I had seemingly been very much isolated from a conscious nearness of those whose presence was especially valued by me; and that I had suffered much from sadness in consequence.

The message claims to be from the higher wisdom of my spirit-helpers, but conveyed to me personally through my nearest guardian and loved one. It is as follows: —

"We, your special loved ones, are not away from

Digitized by Google

you, as you seem to think. We are only — for wise and important reasons — out of your special sphere of consciousness for a time. It is to teach you more fully self-reliance, — the power of your own will to work out *for yourself* high results.

"You should learn to stand nobly up, both in body and spirit, and breathe in deeply of the inspirations of a healthy and positive energy.

"Then, when your own powers are fully expanded, the helps of the higher life will amply brace you up to whatever work you may find it in your way to do. In other words, the lesson is, to be positive to all the natural obstacles and discordances of the external world; and negative, or quietly receptive, to the unseen influences that may flow down to you in response to the earnest aspirations of your inner being.

"The central thought is, that help comes to those who first help themselves. Hence, if you would enjoy most fully the sympathy and aid of the higher conditions, you must aim to grow up to them, rather than expect that they will descend toward you.

"It is true, that, as a needed self-protection, a good degree of retirement and isolation may still be rightly yours for a season; but this is only because a well-rounded and perfectly harmonious development is a thing of the future rather than of the present; and if you would learn to grow wisely, and with accelerated steps, learn to lean as little as possible upon *any thing* but your own will-force, aided and inspired, as it will then surely be, by the superior helps that will spontaneously come to you."

Digitized by Google

A RAINBOW OF ANGELS' SMILES.

"A most beautiful and cheering vision is given to me personally," said the seer. "A rainbow of the evening of my life's labors is before me, the colors of which seem to be composed of the smiles of angels. Many, *many* tears have fallen from the clouds that have gone before this rainbow; but I can now see that all is right, and I would not have it otherwise than it has been. I have thus learned better how to pity other suffering ones; and also rightly to enjoy the brightness when it does come to me, even as now. But there is a vision of instruction prepared for me to impart, and I must now turn my attention to that.

AN INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER: HOW PREPARED.

"There is now before me a child of about six years of age, — one who seems to be under the special care and influence of a wise spirit band. Electric cords of light extend from the child's brain upward into the higher regions of the spirit-life. There are many of these, — one, I think, for each organ of the brain; and each of these cords seems to be in the care of some individual member of the band. In this way, the faculties and tendencies of the subject are wisely checked and balanced for future inspirational use.

"As this child increases in years, he is kept mentally in a restrained, inactive condition, so that the friends know not rightly how to understand him. If books are placed before him, the boy does not seem at all

Digitized by Google

to study them; and yet he often grasps the entire meaning at one glance of his intuitive perceptions.

"Several years pass on in this way until, as I now see him, he is at about the age of fourteen or fifteen, and is nearly fitted for his special work as a public speaker under spirit control. But there is still wanted a voice more full and well-rounded in power. So the training-force is now brought to bear upon the organs of speech; and impulsively, without his own conscious effort, various sounds — some like the different key-notes of the human voice, and some like the sounds uttered by animals — are forced through the vocal organs of the subject. And now, at about the age of sixteen, he seems fitted for his work, and goes forth, passing out of the scope of my vision.

"The scene changes. A broad platform, considerably elevated above the heads of the people, is before me. On this are many noble ones who through earnest and faithful self-discipline have reached a position fitting them to be eminent advocates of the advanced truths of the age. With these there is no marring of the beauty and force of their teachings by their own unworthy lives, as is seen sometimes to be the case. But full of a wise though humble spirit are these, and led on by an earnest zeal, knowing themselves to be instruments of power indeed; but powerful only because of the high wisdom of which they are the conscious recipients.

"And now these nobly inspired ones seem no longer to rest upon a platform, but to be borne upward, entirely free from material supports, by the invisible power which is with them.

Digitized by Google

"In close connection with these who are still of the earthly life, I can see groups of noble reformers of the spirit-spheres. Some of these groups are formed around a central light, the rays of which are constantly passing to the different individuals of the group; and each of these groups is seen to have some special department of diseased human condition in charge. Overgrown and morbid appetites are especially the objects of their labors. They seem to have the power to bring to bear upon such diseased or abnormal portions of the human brain, a kind of electric force which tends to tone down and keep under all undue action, and thus gradually to induce a much-needed harmony of the entire organism.

"Over and above all this especially organized working effort, there presides something like a congress of the higher wisdom, whose guiding influence is felt throughout all the executive groups; and thus the great work is made to advance steadily and successfully onward toward the desired end.

THREE REFORM GROUPS: A VISION.

"A group of these reform-laborers in spirit-life now approaches and lingers over the central portion of our city. They are mostly of the gentler sex; and they have instruments of music in their hands, with the harmonies of which they are hoping to soothe and heal the maladies of the people.

"But just above this group I see another of a very different description, the members of which seem to

Digitized by Google

look down upon the efforts of the others kindly but incredulously. From this upper group, strong and determined arms of force are stretched forth, whilst a voice seems to say, —

"'The efforts of our sisters are very well in their place; but here are evils that can not be charmed away with sweet sounds. A strong arm of power must be revealed, to draw men out of the slough of sense and sensuality in which they are rolling. Let them first be made to stand upon the rock of common honesty and integrity, and let the filth of their former doings be washed away from them: *then* it may be well for the sweet harmonies of peace and love to be visited upon them.'

"But still higher, above the positions of these two groups, appears another whose more exalted wisdom seems to harmonize the divergent tendencies of the others. The words which come from this group seem to have a direct bearing upon the condition of Spiritualism as it is now found in our midst. I can not repeat in full, the exact language employed; but the substance is as follows: —

"'It is true that mild and quieting measures have an important use, and that not even one strain of sweetness and harmony can ever be lost, as to the well-being of humanity. But a deeper and far more thorough work must be done before a substantial reform, personal or social, can be established. Words of truth and power, leading to the very foundations of character, must be spoken, and lessons of terrible rebuke be given, before the harmonies of peace and

Digitized by Google

love can be rightly appropriated. The talk of the beauty and joy of the angel world is well, when rightly applied. But these are not, *can not* be, for any but those in whom the seeds of such beauty and joy are already unfolding to greet the pure spiritual light of the higher Beyond.

"'A mist of ignorance still lingers largely even over Spiritualists, which must be scattered before the power of the new faith shall be rightly felt in the personal life: it is the want of a right understanding or a due appreciation of the unerring force of the law of retribution, which, commencing its action in the earthly, extends it with increasing emphasis into the spirit-life, where it will not stay its progress until the dross of character is consumed, and the inward life is made brightly to harmonize with the higher angel-life.

"'And in this process of purification and growth, the positive individual will must have much to do. For elevated and enduring excellence is not to be attained without conscious and aspiring effort, inspired as such must ever be, with all needful help from above. Difficulty, struggle, progress, — this is the divine order of spiritual growth, which can not be reversed or evaded; and those who expect easily, even *passively*, to float into the kingdom, mainly on the current of outward circumstance, will *there*, if not here, find out their mistake; and then the *foundations*, instead of the superstructure of a true character, will be the first work laboriously in hand.

"'And this eternal law of retribution is just and

Digitized by Google

wise, and *merciful* even, in all its ways, since it is the wisely appointed means for a deliverance into the conditions of true peace and rejoicing. For, in the very nature of things, there can be no throb of exalted joy in store for any, until it shall be rightly inherited through positive and aspiring effort; nor can there be a single act of baseness, of selfishness, or wrong of any kind, which must not first receive its natural and deep-searching penalty, before the sigh of regret can be exchanged for the inward joy of honest self-approval.'"

The above report very imperfectly represents the entire occasion especially as to the language actually used. I am confident, however, that I have preserved the true tone and sentiment of what was thus given us. The *séance*, as a whole, was especially impressive, there being an unusual degree of elevated earnestness manifested throughout.

This proved to be the conclusion of our special work for the present. But it was intimated by the controlling intelligence, that a still more important effort awaited us, should the events of the future prove propitious.

As to the material already accumulated, it was intrusted to my care with the expressed desire that I should make a wise use of it for the public good, a purpose which I have thus endeavored faithfully to accomplish.

Digitized by Google

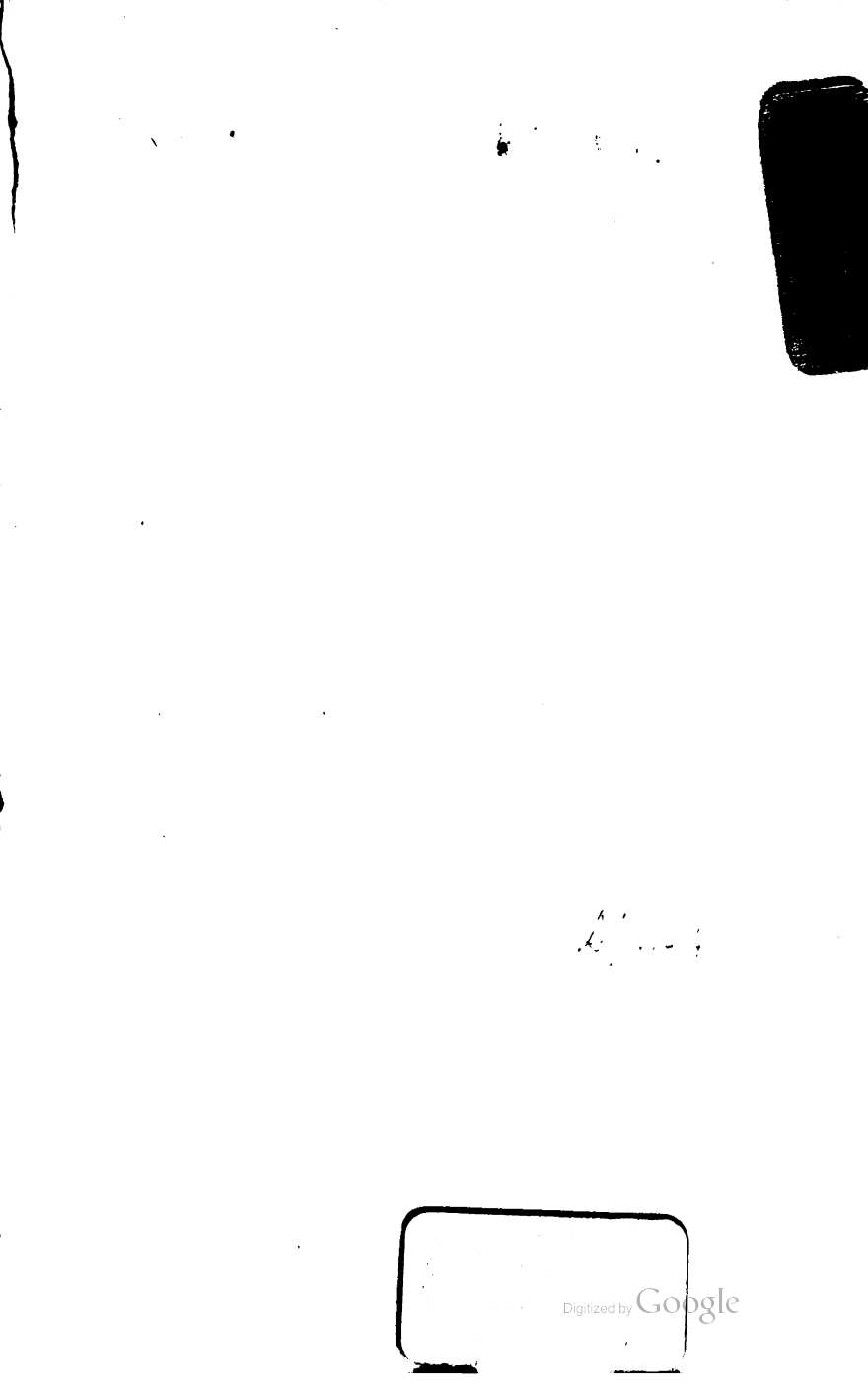
Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

JUN 0 1 1993.

Digitized by Google


Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google